



SHAG STAMP

N061996



The delay of this issue can (mainly) be put down to technical reasons, to computers, my limited access to them and their bloodymindedness in carrying out simple tasks- so don't ever ask me why I do performance art! I love what desk top publishers can do, but I'm afraid on a political level I wish to embrace 'real' communication. The spoken word, the live act, the person in front of you, or in a hand written letter; *talking*.

-Coz that's what it's all about for me. Social contact, human contact. Gregariousness.

*Thankyou* to all the women who so honestly shared with me stories similar to the ones in *Hickey*. I haven't printed them because they were not written for print and for 100s to read, but I do appreciate it. Likewise to the people who've come and spoken to me about a performance or a video or whatever. At the end of the day I don't do work to be swallowed up by a system error; it's no use to me stuck inside a disc and it's no use to me if it's not discussed. The fact that I meet and talk to more people through music and zines and gigs rather than 'art' means it is this basic thing that is so valuable and important to me. Because I create and produce, well, partly because I can't stop. It's a part of me, it's not a career path but part of life, a gift but also a compulsion- an addiction to produce, and why I don't worry about stopping when I leave art college or if I can get a career- I *know* I will have this for life, it's my own sanity- for better or for worse. Being able to communicate and relate to others makes it for the better.



On T.V. the other day Bjork defined pornography as a sort of '4th class communication', where things have got a bit muddy. I liked that. I like to look at where communication breaks down. Becoming more articulate has been one of the great things about growing up. Becoming articulate has helped me feel strong. I feel very strong, right now, about not being a victim. About not being co-opted by someone like Leeds City Council, with their 'zero tolerance' posters. Those posters wind me up so much because they show every woman and girl as a potential victim yet show no possible solution. And I honestly believe that a refusal to be a victim on my part is a way of not getting too hurt. Pity is the cornerstone of social purity movements, the antithesis of the sexually upfront woman. Pity is a godawful emotion and I have no interest in martyrs. Too often with women the only histories documented are bad experiences, and I think this is something intrinsically wrong with feminism.

I really do think women are more the realists- we can take the sordid more than men can. Maybe it's true that women are closer to chaos and blood and bodily functions. Are we the natural anarchists, the true erotic clowns? Men are generally the romantic idealists. Even in rage they're pretty impractical.

And my mum says she doesn't really want to hear about sleaze, referring to going to see *Trainspotting*, and I think about how I could 'make it' with stories like *Hickey*. With gritty realism. But I keep on spoiling it all by wanting to talk about fantasies and cliches or by imbuing the men with some positive attributes, by not painting them as all bad, by being contradictory and ambiguous and actually quite liking some of them. Coz *Hickey* was for real. I didn't strip just to

write that, I'm not a spy. And sometimes it is bad when it's real and not middle class fantasies, and you just don't think about it, *you get on with your life*. Which is why sometimes I'd rather write about film stars than gritty realism, yet it seems no-one wants *Dynasty* anymore- middle-class voyeurism has cast its eye on the poor, they want the glamour of the underworld. And I find my look at America



has become more about white trash in the North of England merging into my stereotypes of America, identifying with it, than America itself.

-There's this writer, he's a right smart cunt see, he's always got an answer for everything and he hates middle class intellectuals who hang around arty cafes discussing films loudly, and the punchline is, now they sit around discussing *Trainspotting*, saying how *outrageous* the characters



are. Does Irvine Welsh become a parody of himself? *Trainspotting*, of course, being about far more than heroin, being about *life* and humour and boredom, and what would the middle-class voyeurs pick up on about my life? What would they find outrageous and sordid in what I feel is just getting by, and I take for granted as normal?





"I've got an infinite number of places where I could go, it's where to stay that's the problem." (Johnny in Mike Leigh's film *Naked*).

"This is where all the scum get washed up. The port of Amsterdam. A dustbin for Eurotrash." (Irvine Welsh, *Eurotrash*).

In looking at America I looked at England. I looked at the way they saw us and we saw them. I thought about the people I know, the vagrants and fugitives who aren't really from anywhere, and then someone at college I overheard saying in reference to travelling, "You'll always have your Englishness," I guess roots are important. But they're also transportable. People get so hung up either with destroying them or clinging on to them.

-Why America? Because America is constantly held up as what England will turn into, *if we're not careful*. Yet countries like England made it what it now is. Because it's a country I see every day in the media, yet I have never been to. It is a contradiction in terms.

Shag Stamp no.6 was also delayed by an impromptu but much enjoyed trip to Hamburg to perform as part of 'Jennifer Blowdryer's Smutfest'. And it seems appropriate to mention that rather than adjust to German culture with all its Nordic reserve, I instead found myself attempting to rationalize the behaviour of the 2 New Yorkers with whom I found myself sharing an apartment. Just what was it that exhausted me so? (their high decibel count in everyday conversation? Their kinship with rooms with no windows? Their compulsion to analyze every-

thing and thus generalize upon the entire German race, from a cross-section from Hamburg's red-light district?)

I read in a guide I got on Hamburg one disgruntled visitor's own addition to the book's information, under St. Pauli having pencilled "*Like Blackpool with a hard-on.*" And it did seem as though the whole over-exposure of the Reeperbahn to sex which seemed to misinterpret everything- the simplest transaction- into some kind of live sex show, made me feel almost



a-sexual, so that we began to peep at Ervin Ross' wonderful painting inside the peepshow doorway. The man tries to invite us in, "*Sexy girls... lesbian show,*" but no, we say, we just want to see the painting.

Now I sit here with a cold and miss the St Pauli drag queens and the New York analysis. I have rewritten the introduction. I would rather simply consider, in reference to America and approach, a quote I found somewhere that Ike Turner was the only person who could spend a million dollars at Woolworths, and Jennifer Blowdryer's statement that, "*It's interesting and they have lots of stores.*"

-Jane Shag Stamp, *October/ November 1996*.

This is my address. I don't actually live in Sheffield anymore, so be patient, but write anyway:-  
P.O. Box 298, Sheffield S10 1YU, U.K.

**Credits:-** Apologies to poor Jo Tofts for taking the photos of me in Hickey and never getting the credit, I took the rest.

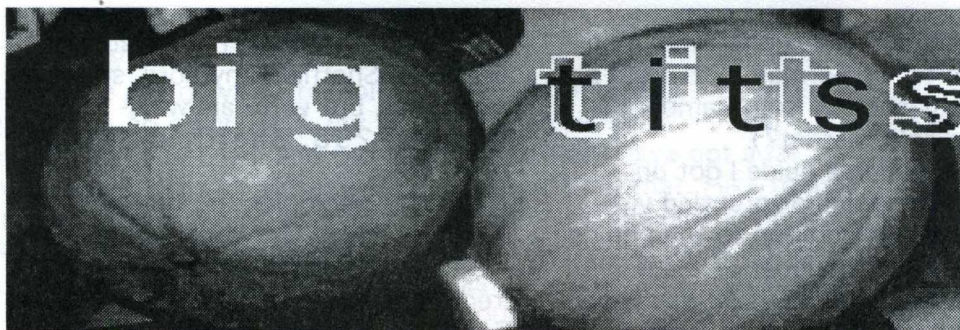
Thanks to Des Man Deablo for the interview and to Ben Graham for the article on baseball.

Front cover from Pirelli Calendar, 1969; photo of Minx (below) by Peter Kirkland; clip art on pgs 2, 3, 17, 24, 26, 27, 32, from 'Matchbox Art'; fish women from Drury lane panto costumes of 1893-4, from 'Winkles + Champagne'; pgs 12, 32 + 33 from 'Hollywood Babylon' by Kenneth Anger; pg.9 image from Readers' Wives; pg.10, Bill Bojangles Robinson and Shirley Temple, film still from The Little Colonel; pg. 14, 'Uptown, Chicago 1965', by Danny Lyon; pg. 15, Hattie McDaniels as Mammy in Gone With The Wind; and pg. 18, Burt Reynolds, from his bio.

**Wants:-** Info. on history of stripping and burlesque (espec. personal anecdotes, U.K. stuff); recordings of vintage strip music; info. on Mata Hari; Lenny Bruce live video or tape/record footage; bios of Gypsy Rose Lee, Ann Corio or Georgia Sothern; people/venues interested in burlesque style performance pieces. Write to me!







"By the end of the 1960s, it was already the case that middle class tastes tended to see voluptuousness in women- particularly larger breasts- as a sign of 'excess', emblematic of tasteless, tacky preferences in the lower classes... it would be interesting to know whether the uproar over 'page 3' photos would be as great if the women pictured did not occasionally deviate from the middle-class standard of slim, small-breasted beauty." (*Avedon Carol, from Nudes, Prudes and Attitudes*).

I am sick and tired of reading in feminist zines about how the editor is cool for not having to wear a bra, or how their role model is cool coz she's sexy and has small tits (just like the editor); -as if women with small tits are never seen in the media or obtain the status of supermodel- and maybe I'm being petty here but these are the same kind of women who go apeshit about the smallest little bit of covert, subtle, sexism. And it seems that Pamela's Anderson's biggest crimes are the two planted on her chest, when there are far worse things to pull her up for. I don't even know what the other woman on *Baywatch* is called, but then her small bosoms haven't helped her achieve notoriety.

The feminist line that has subtly made small tits the right tits for thinking women has led to great distortion. I go around thinking my 36C knockers are huge -not that I even knew my size until recently, by the way, in case you think I go around quoting my vital statistics- when I read somewhere the average cup size in Britain is like the D cup, but when I also read about pornography containing images of monstrous breasts bouncing out at you, and then most of what I see involves women with similar or smaller boobs than me. (Specialist big tits stuff is different).

Most women I've seen working as strippers or lifemodells and happy to expose their breasts have had smaller jugs than me. And though, yes, big busters are sometimes an asset in such circles and I'm very attached to mine, (I think they've helped to make me who I am), I look at women with smaller chests with a tinge of jealousy. And it's not necessarily the male patriarchy who've made me feel that way, though it is the media. Intellectual and feminist media.

Classy birds on the TV always have small tits, see. What it comes down to is that big mams are brash and vulgar. "Erotic" films have a classy woman with small busts, whereas mine might just be pornographic. I can even get my tongue round them, and that's so *Razzle*, isn't it?

So if all the women in films and doing strips make my paps look big, and Pamela Anderson the exception, where are all the women with these 'average' D cups? The answer must obviously be covering them up. Most women with large hooters aren't in their *Miss Selfridge* tight T-shirts, they're wearing baggy, sloppy tops. A lot of them are probably fat, and whatever happened to fat being a feminist issue?

I watched *Eurotrash* last night with this French woman 'Loulou' I think she was called who had breasts that she'd enlarged so much they made me feel quite sick, actually, but it was so absurd, she must have had a sense of humour. I think really she just rendered feminists intellectualizing the negative aspects of Pamela Anderson and debating the nature of her chest completely redundant, I mean what better way to illustrate the absurdity of men's obsession with large



what a lovely pair



knockers than to inflate them until they became utterly stupid and artificial? She claimed the guy behind the design was an aerodynamic specialist with Boeing 747. I really do not think her melons could be seen as seriously offensive. Maybe if men had the humour to do that with their dicks?

-And while we're on the subject, fuck it, I've got nothing against plastic surgery either. Not even completely pointless plastic surgery. Why not. Why not waste money and resources in the same way the NHS and government do everyday with media stunts. I'm into tattoos, so why not someone have horns on their head or gynormous bazongas, fuck it.

Think about the different language you use as well, you who use 'womyn' because language is so important. Why is it always small breasts, but big tits?

- I'm sick of intellectuals and feminists alike subtly and subconsciously making me want the small mammaries of classy birds, that mine are brash, tasteless and vulgar. Big boobies aren't Pamela Anderson, they're the prototype formidable boilers of the great British empire, they're the kitchen sink heroines, the working class women versus the English rose with her fried eggs.

I saw *Tilt* last summer and my eyes were glued to Cinder Block's tits. She had this punky kinda top on which really showed them bouncing when she was dancing around. She looked fuckin ace. She was so hot, I didn't dare admit it coz she was so punk rock and spitting everywhere- I felt kinda bad about ogling her but fuck, I think I'll dedicate this issue to Cinder Block's tits.

"With a tight lipped, whippet faced, talkative woman they were as flat as porridge plates or tinier than pheasant's eggs, but with an open-mouthed, cheeky faced, laughing woman you always had something to get hold of." (*Alan Sillitoe, Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*).



Piercing and tattooing are important to me for a number of reasons, one of which being a need to remind myself once in a while of my physicality and my body and to give myself the time to let it heal. When I have a piercing or a tattoo done I forget about any depression I might be harbouring under, I concentrate on my physical pain. I watch it healing, I watch how it gets gradually better each day. I take the time to clean it, I give my body some time instead of rushing around not bothering.

-I get off on the initial pain, I admit it. I get off on the close attention the piercer/ tattooist pays to me, the care they take over my body, the intimacy and the physical contact, an hour or so devoted to my body, leaning over, all that attention. I lie there, and I feel. It's not often you really feel physically, such an acute and temporary (this being the key-word here) pain. (I used to have a fantasy when I was younger about being in an accident and being looked after by doctors!). And I come home high and treat myself to taking it easy. There's no way I'd have more than one done at a time, or not allow myself that healing gap before considering another one. To me each one represents a specific time I spent adjusting and getting used to it being there, physically and mentally. It seems tattooing/ piercing makes me all new age!

Because I believe so much in the actual ritual of having them done, tattoos are more to me than merely badges. I want something which doesn't just sit on the surface of my skin, but becomes part of my body image, which moves when I move. I don't feel the need to display my beliefs across my body- apart from in ideology, how is branding 'vegan' into your skin any different from 'property of...', 'skins', a favourite band, nazi or anti-nazi insignia- I'm not one for sloganeering or badge wearing, to me relegating tattooing to this level is like the fall of grafitti art to the daubing of slogans. And anyway, a 'V' sign on my body would make my feel like a piece of food, a commodity. Is your body not a 3 dimensional object? Why is this considered so rarely when it comes to tattoos?

-And so, everybody asks, "what do they mean?" Well, they mean a lot to me, but not in what they actually *are*. To look at, they mean different things to different people- a moth, a toucan, a spider, a woman's legs. It's an abstract design, but it's a curve, a muscle, a line, a bone...

-Like a lot of people, I seem to get tattooed to 'cheer myself up' on occasions. And recently I noticed how tattooed I was, coz it kinda creeps up on you, one at a time, suddenly you've got 4 big fat black abstract designs on your body. Some folk seem to think by stripping I'm offering up my body to all these men, well I like to think tattooing/ piercing helps me to feel like it is my own. My body makes me a fair bit of money, so I like to give it a little back. I like to spend some of the money making it special to me.







# kitchen sink

really really old; and the students next door, the girl -a magistrate's daughter-who always came round half dressed; the arsehole; and the professional boxer studying English with his jaw wired up from a brawl with some girl's boyfriend, who'd come round to see my cat. His coach, a beefy, menacing looking bloke with kids her age, was shagging the girl who rarely got more than half dressed. If you sat in the attic room of our house you could hear them arguing. They'd come and visit (the students) and we'd sit there in our arm-chairs and let them entertain us. And they did not disappoint, foolish as they were.

And we had other guests; the nutter who'd always come round the day they let him out of gaol, and he'd come round every day until he'd inevitably get sent back down again; or methadone man, an electrical genius, crackpot inventor, but also hopeless drug fiend whose liberal voting mum would skin up for him; the ex-alcoholic whose wife had recently died of cancer and who had shortly after been attacked by his machete wielding neighbour, a care in the community case, and who enjoyed angling as his particular therapy; not to mention all the other waifs and strays who'd come and score, bring their kids, teenage daughters and friends. There were days I thought I couldn't handle this, I can't work like this, but I let it be.

It would remind me sometimes of films with the busy street scenes of Harlem, or New Orleans in *Streetcar Named Desire*, y'know the kind where street vendors call out their wares and black women shimmy across the moonlit streets. Never before had I lived somewhere where everyone uses their backdoors, with a communal yard, a yard sometimes busier than the street. Our yard was its own little community. Ralph's

family put their sofa out in their bit of yard and the kids would spill over in their plastic tractors and run screaming from the dogs. I'd sit and attempt to read a book in the sun, next to our huge pile of bottles waiting for a trip to the bottle bank, "what you doin'?" "why?" small children with dirty faces would enquire between terrorizing the pigeons. I never even finished a page.

We had a shop round the front and a chippy a couple of doors down and sometimes folk from Bob's chippy would stand and eat their chips in our yard. Come to think about chippys, there were always fights in the Chinese breaking out when I first moved n'all. The detritus from the shop overflowed into our yard, along with the pigeons. It was always scruffy, no matter how hard we tried. And in the summer, flies would always swarm in great congregations around our wheelie bin, which always stank of dogshit.

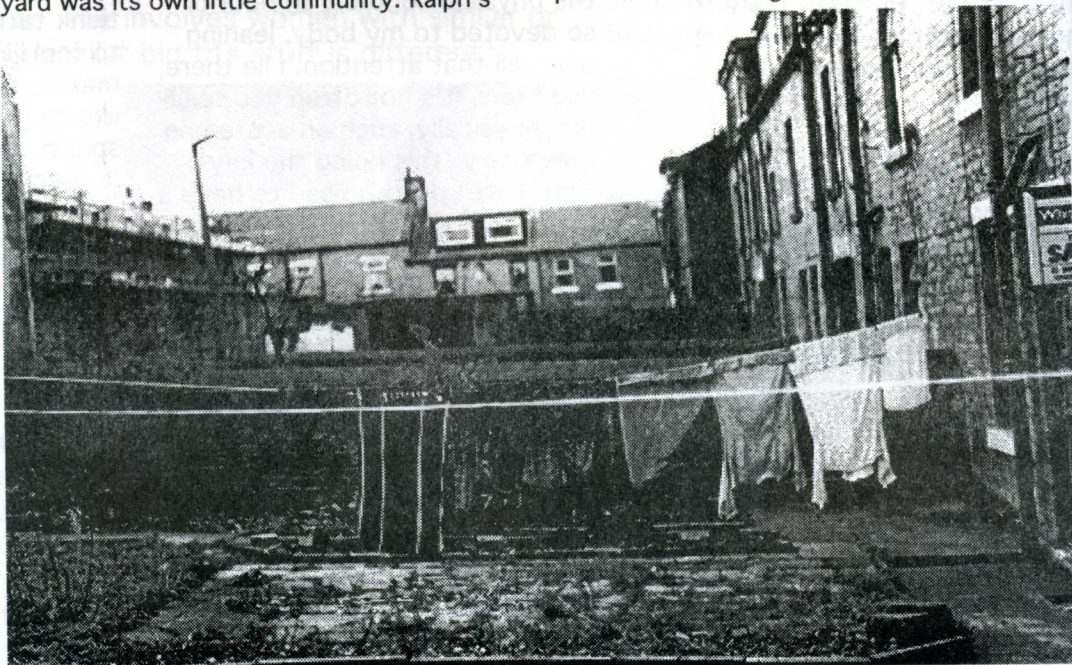
Across the road, would-be gangsters hanging outside the pub we'd have to walk past on the way to the phonebox, feel their eyes following your walk on your back. My window open during the night when the summer was so stiflingly hot and the noise as the kids would congregate on the corner and scream at each other. Always seemed to be a near riot every night of the summer. The cops cruising, always keeping a close eye on our road.

That summer, with our yard a mass of washing lines and washing, that summer was so hot everyone would have their doors and windows open. I remember when Grant found out about Sharon and Phil at the end of an episode of Eastenders hearing next door shout, "shit!"

So much happened in our yard. People pissed in there. Arguments were fought

I remember when I first moved out of the parental home and into my own house I was all excited because I'd never lived on a street before. And then when I moved to Sheffield, for the first time we had a kind of communal yard, and that summer I lived there, I loved that yard.

When I first arrived there I was introduced to all the neighbours, it was the first time I'd ever known my neighbours' names, let alone formal introductions. There was Rosie, who got dressed up and wore a hat on a Sunday for church and complained about my cat shitting in her garden; Ralph, the Asian taxi driver -after months of joking, "whoever heard of an Asian guy called Ralph?" Simon finally admitted Ralph wasn't his name at all, he'd just misheard him when he'd initially introduced himself; all the Asian women who shuffled really slowly into the yard at a snail's pace, like they were





there, bottles were kicked at walls, the van was painted in there. Once, the neighbours had a party and, not to be outdone, we decided to have a yard party, but that's another story. Shit, if I'd have suggested we had a yard sale we'd probably have been up for that. I guess if we lived in the States we would have been *po' white trash*. And then finally the stoned haze of that time lifted, I moved to hedge lined suburbia, a quiet that kept me awake at night, speed bumps and neighbours who were rock climbers and journalists for *the Independent*. It wasn't the same. I loved that yard.

# dead

"My son's lyin dead in co-op coz a you!"

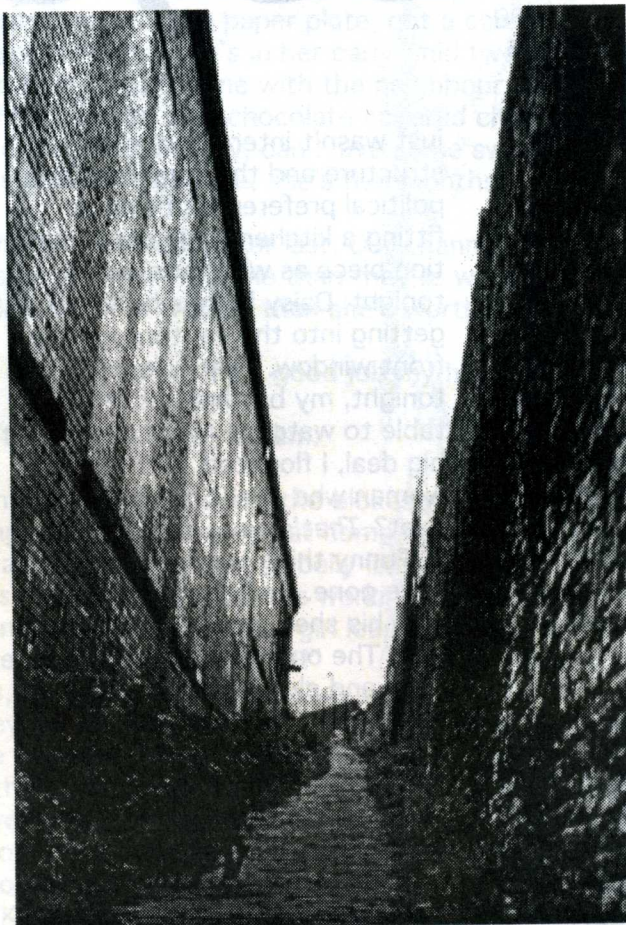
The woman (white) cried emotionally out of the door, following the man (Asian) to his car parked outside with more anguished calls and threats. He ignored her, got into his car, a flash red boy racer affair. She seemed powerless. Her line guaranteed to grab shock and attention (it had made *us* look) had not worked. The guy drove off.

It was four in the morning, on a gray, red-bricked Derby street somewhere close to the city centre in August. Across the road from the woman with the dead baby, we were having a street party, so arranged by moving the sofa out of the front room and onto the pavement. Those who were left at this time, being kept awake by the effects of drugs and perhaps not quite of sound mind, were offering anyone foolish enough to be up at this time to come in for a cup of coffee.

I'd arrived -from what direction I'm not sure, after the pubs had chucked out and with plenty of drink inside me- with a man I knew as I'd met him five minutes before when walking up the road. Someone else I knew, and had done for longer than five minutes, had copped off and disappeared, and then on arrival - finding there were only about 10 people there- I'd been offered coffee. I'd drunk it before I'd ascertained it was mushroom coffee, *like people offer you ordinary coffee when you get to a party...* Oh well, I shrugged, not having done mushrooms before, sitting on the sofa wondering what was going to happen.

I'd kind of forgotten about the mushrooms when I went to the bog for a piss and I started seeing snakes slithering through the laundry scat

tered on the bathroom floor. When I went back outside and the fat, balding, middle-aged, lecherous neighbour started coming on to me I was rolling around on the pavement giggling at him and abusively taking the piss. "Janey baby," he slavered with his hand on my knee, but I was out of it- I really could not give a fuck. Snakes again. Snakes seemed to have caught my imagination and were crawling up the red bricked walls across the road. Drainpipes.



# baby

**At four in the morning the woman screamed, "My son's lying dead in co-op coz a you!" and we watched, mesmerized, at the soap opera unfolding before our very eyes.**

In the morning I came down and realized I was in a strange house in a strange town with junkies and no-one I knew. The man I'd met walking up (down?) the road was doing the ironing with the cord hanging loose on the floor from the iron, no-where near the plug socket, with a contented smile on his face at 5 or 6 a.m. while I was coming down to Jobfinder (Central region). I had planned to go to Wales that day, but I wouldn't be leaving this house for a while. My head was fucked. I watched shit T.V and drank cups of coffee, not moving hardly from the sofa. The girl came down during the day to get a syringe and went back upstairs with a quick hello. I had no money and when some other guy staying there came over and put his hand on my shoulder I nearly freaked. I felt like I might be trapped in that house forever, like the boy in the co-op. Everything seemed to be falling apart.

At four in the morning the woman screamed, "My son's lyin' dead in co-op coz a you!" and we watched, mesmerized, at this soap opera unfolding before our very eyes. I interpreted thus, the woman was this guy's mistress, he'd been round to sleep with her, they'd had sex and now he was returning to dutiful wife, conjugal bed and no doubt legitimate kids, and she wasn't happy. She'd had his illegitimate child but it'd died, perhaps due to neglect or lack of love, and she couldn't afford a proper funeral, he wouldn't help so it was just lying in the co-op funeral parlour. A co-op funeral. -More dramatic interpretations came to mind, she meant the co-op shop, he'd killed her son, a duel of honour. but no, this was the most plausible. He was a callous, unfeeling man. It was a tragic tale, full of high drama, love, betrayal and bastard offspring. But I was tripping and laughing hysterically at this misfortune, crawling on the pavement trying to put my hand over my gob so the poor woman wouldn't hear me.



# good ole boys

Tracy Potter had a girl's name. But no-one could disagree that Tracy was a lad, coz when his junked-up *Capri* painted in the style of the *Dukes of Hazzard* drove past me playing in my garden on the top track his horn'd go, "Ne'l ne-ne-ne-de-ne-de-ne-ne-neh", which as any scholar of American history will know is a butchered parody of *Dixie*, the anthem of the Southern states.

Tracy Potter lived at *Daisy Lee Farm*. Not really a farm, they had bits and bobs of animals. Can't really remember who the animals belonged to down there, chickens and goats wandering aimlessly, tethered and bleating, dogs, alsations and jack russells mainly, and an old carhouse out with the cows. A thriving crop of half-mended cars, disabled or under-going transplants, sometimes tended to but mostly abandoned, bloomed in the forecourt. There were two families opposite each other with land and buildings assymetrically branching out as members outgrew the original home; both had a gang of older brothers who were gone away and married or about to be married or *courting*, and they'd all bear the family resemblance- gawky, mumbling lads taken to mucking up their hands on the engines of cars. With a daughter more my age, perhaps a little bit older, who played on the *daddy's girl* role in a her environment of men and cars and smelly billy goats.

I don't remember how close to the truth this is. I could maybe get my mum to clear it in my head some, but that might spoil it. Did Tracy Potter have lots of girlfriends? Or did he just have eyes for his car? Whatever happened to him?

There wasn't many sociology lecturers in those parts. Corduroy and beards and pipes. Thought our living room was a study coz it had books in. And I wish I could get back to the time before the boundaries set in, before I knew even though it was already there I

just wasn't interested, class structure and the neighbour's political preferences being as fitting a kitchen table conversation piece as what was on TV tonight. Daisy Duke's butt and getting into the car through the front window. That was on TV tonight, my brother had left the table to watch it. What was the big deal, I flounced, with a woman who sticks her bum out a lot? *That's coz you're a girl...*

Funny thing is, the Potters have gone. And the old man with his shed and his rabbits for sale. The only animals are gun dogs and elegant ponies now which snort contemptuously and flair their nostrils at me, range rovers in the place of cortinas and capris, patios placed over the remains of carburettors and engine bits. I guess a college lecturer wouldn't be so out of place no more. But when I knew nothing about class, my only worry was that Tracy Potter had a girl's name!

All my local childhood action-men heroes fell dramatically from their pedestals; the school heart-throb, 3 years my senior, after his athletic schoolyears glory became fat, bloated and invalid due to extreme asthma- his girlfriend, whom my brother had once sat next to in geography, wistful and doe-eyed, stayed by him, however; **Big Daddy**, the wrestler, who also had a girl's name, incidentally- Shirley- who always fought Giant Haystacks on the Saturday afternoon televised wrestling bouts of the early '80s, went into guilt- driven retirement after blaming himself for

the death of another wrestler who had died after a fight with him; and **Kenny Carter**, always almost-but-not-quite speedway champion of the world, grew tired of constant pins and plates in his shattered, broken legs and his nearly-theres, and shot his wife at their luxury farmhouse home before turning the gun on himself leaving a message to, 'make sure the kids are okay.' Apparently he thought she was having an affair. The local paper called him, 'a star with the world at his feet... to the world he was a near millionaire who drove a £31,000 white lotus esprit and didn't have a care in the world.' He hid a life of tragedy however, it claimed- don't we all? It was just before spring bank holiday weekend and my 13th birthday, in 1986. My brother says it would make a great film, how about a musical? He left a half sister in my year at school, and now no-one remembers him. Anthony knew Big Daddy's daughter. But they're all gone, like Tracy Potter's Jack-the-lad car horn.



## Brothers kings of the tracks

The Carter family's impact on the world of motor-cycles was spear-headed by speedway star Kenny and Grand Prix racer Alan. Behind the friendly rivalry of the brothers,

determination to win and the support of their father, garage owner Malcolm Carter.

The bond was complete when Kenny took Alan under his wing to promote and manage

from:- Halifax Evening Courier



Adele is not an overly tall woman, five foot five or thereabouts, with dark, pronounced features that she shares with all her family, masked almond eyes and shaggily permed dark hair and a hint of freckles below the scar next to her left eye, remnants of a street brawl with a neighbour, a bit of trouble with another family, "She came at me wi'a bottle, but she looked worse than I did after," she remarks with a smile.

Adele is sitting cross-legged on top of a kitchen work surface, bare footed and bare legged, short dress hitched up and creased around her waist, eating sausage rolls and quarters of ham sandwiches off a paper plate, not a care in the world, she might have been 7 years old but she's in her early- mid twenties, couldn't be sure exactly. She's four kids at home with the neighbour, riding their bikes round the debris filled garden with chocolate covered cheeks and hands, mam, mam, pulling at her coat indignantly, can I 'ave some sweets, mam, fuck off, will yer? Adele lights another cigarette, she's five months pregnant.

"I must be mad me, 'avin another one so soon after last. Our Leanne's only six month- I want a lad me, lasses are more trouble than they're worth, once they get older. Other one's already more trouble than she's worth, and she's only four."

She displayed a back red with carpet burns. "It's a good job my husband's inside, int it."

I speak me mind, me. If I don't like someone, I tell em.

She's not showing as pregnant, you'd never think, the blokes with their eyes on her and their cocks flopping out and their wives at home don't think, think she's different. I don't get that big, me, just a little belly like what you get when you come on. And the last one she had, she was working at six month and she were doing a lesbian spot when the other girl leapt off her like she'd seen a ghost. "It moved!" she hissed. "I felt it move!"

I 'ad big tits, till I had me kids, then they shrivelled, they were big when I were 'avin 'em, I liked that, but they shrunk.

At least her husband's inside and out of way, coz there's some as'll tek the lot, all of it, on mortgage and their sens, when there's bills comin' in, not enough for kids' new shoes, not even enough to invest in a new pair of stockings. But he won't black er eyes, no matter how much he hates her working, he won't stop her, he needs the money.

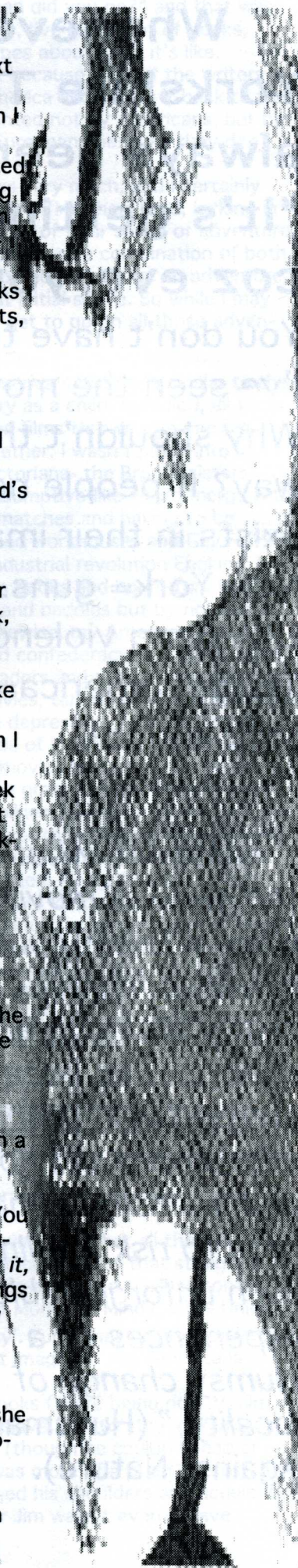
"'Ave yer got any condoms? Kids've bin through me bag. There'll be condom balloons when I get 'ome,"

Speaking her mind, chucking pints over punters' heads, threatening to put windows through, it doesn't always make her friends. But Adele is a kitchen sink queen, always there at the frontline. The fatalist mythicism of the working classes, Hylda Baker as the next door neighbour, resilient, formidable women, "laughing, loving and fighting together", props for moral or political messages, Willy Russell's *real* feelings vs. *druggy* feelings (said in overdone scouse accent), how much free will do you allow these characters? The BBC could never quite come to terms with their caustic accents, tone them down a bit, have Wendy Craig in the part.

Adele, does she think whether she wants another kid? Does she think she doesn't have to have it? She's not thick, she's certainly not sheltered. You forget what it's like, when you're in labour, you can't remember. Like a country and western singer, queen of determined fatalism. *You don't think about it, otherwise you couldn't carry on.* Some folk worry about kids and all the things you should eat and do before you conceive, and **plan it-** but *in my day you just 'ad em.*

To be a writer is to exploit. It's to pick up characters and lines and stories you see and hear and use them. She might sue so you change the names, you mix characters together, so it's the same character with traits she hates. You don't want to exploit people so you write about yourself and people call you egotistical. You mould them into kitchen sink drama queens, heroines of domesticity, you twist them out of all recognition so it doesn't matter. But I want to write about real people, I'm scared to rip them off, I'm not sure what to do.

"You think that's mad, you're not the one who's living it."





Whenever a shooting occurs in the Yorkshire T.V. region these days they always seem to show a witness going, "It's getting like New York round here," coz everyone knows New York= guns.

You don't have to have been there, I've seen it on the telly I've seen the movies, ER. I aint going there. I'll get shot.

Why shouldn't they believe that? And does it matter anyway? If people never get to go anywhere, it only really exists in their imagination. It's just a symbol.

New York= guns.

LA= gang violence.

To me, America= rock and roll.

*"After all, what was the good of moving, when a fellow could travel so magnificently sitting in a chair?.... I've been steeped in English life ever since I left home, and it would be madness to risk spoiling such unforgettable experiences by a clumsy change of locality," (Huysmans, Against Nature).*

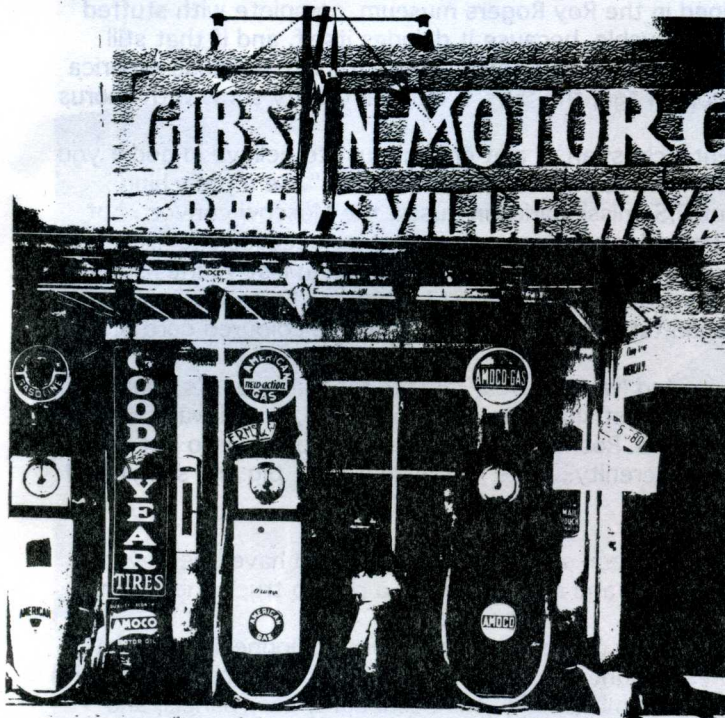




When I told one person I was doing a zine about America they went, "Why, when did you go?" and that was just the point- I haven't been and am not planning to in the near future. But, like many, I've read a lot of books, watched a lot of films, not to mention T.V. from the U.S. and I have a lot of stereotypes about what it's like.

Most of what I know about America is from Hollywood, which is kind of strange because a lot of the writers and directors in Hollywood are foreigners and immigrants cooking up their view of America and selling it back to the rest of the world (and to the Americans) as the real thing. The myth of America invented not by Americans, but by Europeans, mainly. Seems like Americans are more obsessed with their history than Europeans because they don't have much to call their own- no fixed roots, just drifting.

What is also bugging me about doing this is that I don't generally *like* Americans very much, and I certainly don't think they merit all the attention they get (I guess why most of this is made up!) -I find them loud, lacking in social etiquette, over- bearing, over-confident, insensitive- but perhaps I am also jealous of their sense of adventure, that they'll do something just for the hell of it. Perhaps it's being English, or being female, or a combination of both, but when I have a strong sense to go off on my own with no money or no place to go because it'll be an adventure, to test myself, everyone helps me make excuses why I shouldn't, and I never get that initial shove. So while I may hate Americans for it, it also means America is kind of like my dream land where I do get to go on all those adventures I put off in too small-town England.



The concept I have of America's history is similar to the one I had of English history as a child- muddled, all facts and fiction from books and films thrown into one big cauldron and mashed together. I wasn't much into Americana then, more Victoriana- the Bronte sisters coughing up blood all consumptive-like would merge with barefoot orphans selling matches and having to be confined to an iron lung and workhouses and Guy Fawkes in this big mishmash of industrial revolution England. I read too many Joan Aiken books and my history was black and white, goodies and baddies but by no means linear or chronological. Likewise, my American history throws in the civil war and confederacy, railroads, injuns, 'happy darkies', homesteaders and a large dose of romanticism from the movies, tempered with documentaries, slavery, voodoo, the depression, prohibition etc...

I guess I like the idea of it all being similar to some kind of 'quest'- the road movie/ the American dream- the taming of the land and the great journey West is somehow reminiscent of my Tolkien obsession where bands of elves, dwarves and whatever toiled across magical lands for some bizarre purpose, usually almost forgotten as further adventures befell them along the way. In the American version, the drifters keep on goin' West after that elusive dream, the Californian land of Hope n' Plenty, and their dogs sure is pooped, and granpaw dies along the way, but still they keep headin' West, till finally they hit the Pacific ocean, and they still aint found it, and

Gas Station, Reedsville, West Virginia, 1936 (Walker Evans)

there aint nowhere else left to go. It's the Great American Tragedy, strugglin' like a country music mother, facing adversity with dignity and eating the crust of humility. America's greatest stars are the ones who were born simple cotton pickers- "By God, I'll never go hungry again,"

I fell in love, too, with the photos of people like Walker Evans and Dorothea Lange. I fell into the trap of depression glamour as I dreamed of Lange's mothers and children and Evan's Celeste like interiors, Steinbeck's hillbillies and Cannary Row just as gangster movies made me glamourize the prohibition period. I read in the intro to one book of Walker Evans' photography, "It is difficult to know with certainty whether Evans recorded the America of his youth, or invented it."

Let us not forget too the effect of Elia Kazan, Tennessee Williams, Martin Scorsese, Clint Eastwood, Mark Twain, William Faulkner and Kenneth Anger upon my already overactive imagination.

Me and Anthony laughed and said we could be on 'You Bet', or something, coz we knew what all the initials in U.S. postcodes stood for, nearly. A few we weren't sure of- he paused on CT (Conneticut- I knew that straight away) while I never knew 'DC' stood for 'District of Columbia', being confused by Washington state and Washington the city being two very different entities. Getting orders from Boulder makes me think of Mork and Mindy, while Union City and Rapid City conjure up glamorous, lawless gangster images of 'saloon society'. Yup, I may not be sure where all the states are, but with their names like song titles they all conjure up a different image for me. America is maybe somewhere I go when I'm tripping and think I'm Huckleberry Finn.

Tom Sawyer, now he was another character who lived in a fantasy world of books (there being no T.V./film world then to live in). It was Tom Sawyer's plans that meant Nigger Jim, a runaway slave, had to stay locked up in a shed and dig his way to freedom with a metal spoon, keeping a diary of his exploits (though he couldn't read or write) because Tom said that was how they did it in *all* the books. Huck Finn, who was more of a practical sort, just asked why they couldn't just *let* him out, as they had access to the key, but shrugged his shoulders and acquiesced to Tom, who wouldn't hear of such an unimaginative escape. As it happened, Nigger Jim wasn't even a slave anymore, but Tom knew these things had to be done properly, and with style.



## "BEING A STAR MEANS NEVER HAVING TO SLEEP ALONE,"

I know about America because I have seen the movies. As I would say America's history is pretty much showbusiness history, why go there? Like Europe in drag, America manages to do an over-the-top, camped-up version of 'civilization'; a pageant in which the history and customs of the place are 'explained' with chorus girls in scanty costumes and unrelated song and dance routines- where normality is somewhere but it's all gone weird in this all singing, all dancing extravaganza. America likes to rip the piss out of European manners, aristocracy, holier-than-thou intellectualism; it likes to see its entertainment form as populous, by and for the common people- the good ole country boy, poor but honest, shows up the pretentious as empty, dishonest people. And we all cheer on fun-loving Indiana Jones as he fights the high- camp nazis. Even as corporations take over the planet, Hollywood exalts the D.I.Y. ethic of making scientific machines from diet pepsi cans while the 'corporate ass wipes' are blown up in their nasty black jeeps for non-co-operation. -Didn't they ever watch Sesame Street? (*Twister*). Mr. Broadway always had an eye for the public; catchy songs, rapid-fire action, and a gimmick of wrapping himself up in an American flag and singing patriotic songs.

Yup, everyone knows Americans are crazy. Americans can't do anything by half measures. You only have to look at Ricki Lake or Montel Williams' talk shows to see Americans is crazy, sister. Singing darkies whistlin' dixie and telling Shirley Temple how to dance. American history explained in the Roy Rogers museum, complete with stuffed Trigger. America is as artificial as Mae West's beauty, but as believable, because it deludes itself, and if that still don't work, it'll create entertainment outta mafia money, glitzy titsy so you gotta believe it's big. Because America is all about putting on a good show. America in a perpetual golden age, the '50s, a musical variety show with chorus girls, Fred Astaire, Frank Sinatra and big steps!

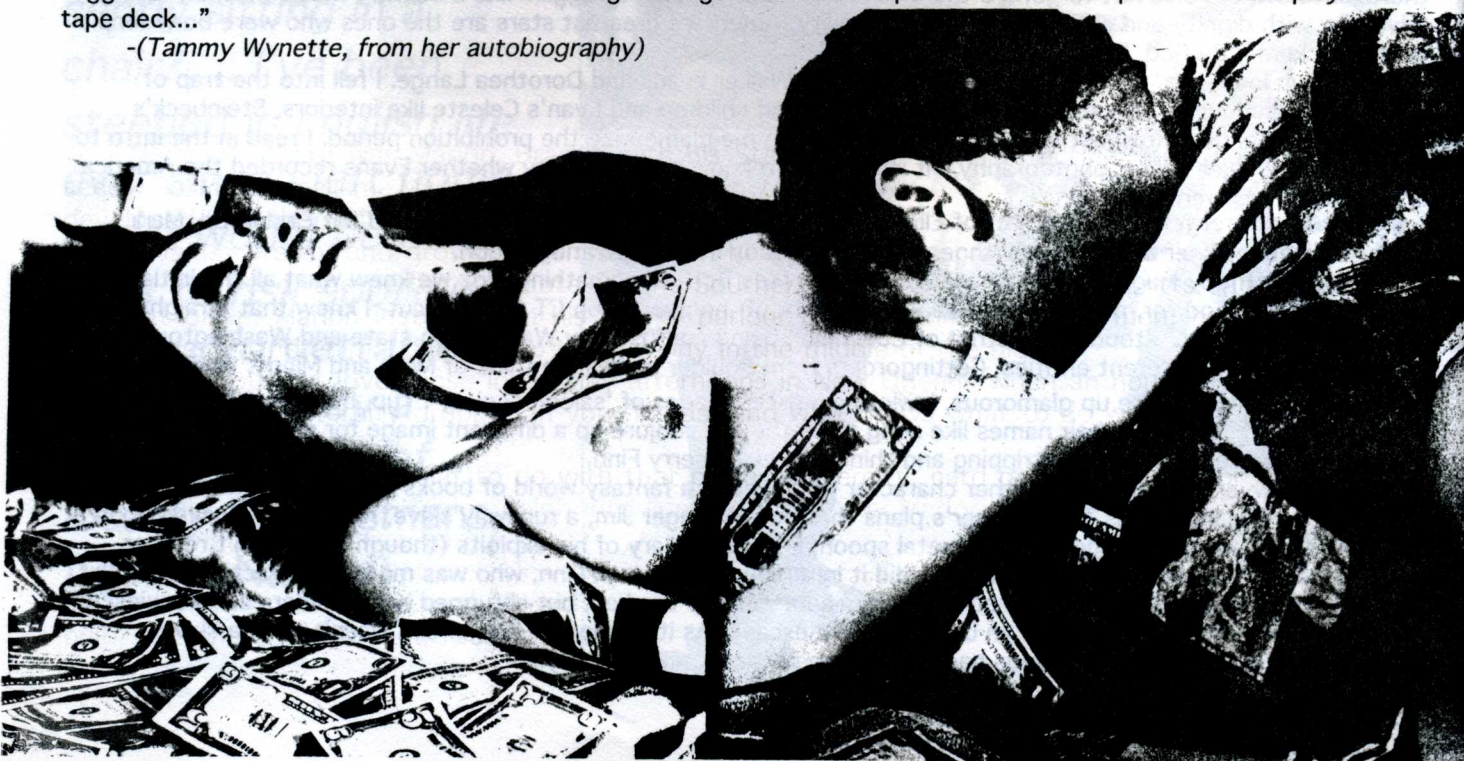
It's about, if you're gonna be a christian, be a fundamental christian, it aint enough just to believe in god if you don't make a song and dance about it; fuck for Christ, get them wives in; "hell, god ain't broke". Be a preaching machine, have majorettes for Christ- on a documentary about U.S. missionaries in Russia the Moscow convert, not sure whether to become a christian or a prostitute (oh how Magdalene-esque), was won over because she 'liked a good show'. Even the h/c bands have this messianistic zeal- yeah, what about the suggestion in last year's MRR letter of a talk show called 'Droogas', hosted by everyone's favourite angry feminist? When are Earth Crisis gonna get a troupe of majorettes together? (they could all have vegan tattoos on their leg and beige coloured cord mini-skirts)-

-It's about pageants and starting em young, big Elvis suits and 'westernwear' outfits for the kids; it's about the biggest cowboy hat you can find; it's about shampoo which is not just shampoo but toothpaste, mouthwash, fruit and plant cleaner and car wash too. 24/7 craziness, that's America. Rock and roll, they sure know how to put on a good show and to hell with pathos, sacred beauty or meditative serenity... let's just have it loud, big and shiny! And jumping out of a cake! Yup, *everyone knows Americans are crazy...*

"Sometimes it's hard for me to realize I lived like that just fourteen short years ago. I would have been overjoyed then just to own an old secondhand car. Now I own a corvette and a Thunderbird, a pickup truck and a van, a bus and an airplane. And am I any happier? You bet I am!"

"The flashiest car we owned wasn't an antique, but a brand-new custom designed Pontiac Bonneville George (Jones) had bought from the famous country- Western clothes designer Mr. Nudie of Hollywood. The car was a white convertible with a plastic dome to protect the 4,000 silver dollars embedded in the dashboard, door panels, and around the hand- tooled leather seats. The hood emblem was horns from a Texas steer, and rifles had been mounted on the front fenders. The door handles were real pistols and the console between the two front seats was a fancy leather saddle. that's where Georgette sat when we drove the car in parades. The car radio came on by pulling a trigger and the horn sounded like a cow mooing . George even had a tape of a cattle stampede he could play in the tape deck..."

-(Tammy Wynette, from her autobiography)





"My father's parents mama and papa Pugh were getting up in years, and I wanted to do something nice for them. George and I bought a piece of land behind Cliff and Maxine's property and built a small trailer court. We named it Tammy's courts and it's still there today. We bought mama and papa a nice new house trailer and moved them down from Alabama."

(Tammy Wynette, from her autobiography)



Stephanie, Sandoval County, New Mexico, 1970 (Danny Lyon)

2 horse town

\$5 cigar

\$10 hooker

10 gallon hat

5 + dime

10 ¢ store



# "Resume your seat, little sister- I want you to stay fresh and pretty- for **gentleman callers!**

One Sunday afternoon in Blue Mountain, your mother received -17! gentleman callers! Why, sometimes there weren't chairs enough to accomodate them all. We had to send the

nigger over to bring in folding chairs from the Paris house...

...Stay fresh and pretty! It's almost time for our gentleman callers to start arriving. How many do you suppose we're going to entertain this afternoon?"

*(from the Glass Menagerie, by Tennessee Williams)*

-I'm sitting out on the front porch swing, looking at the stars and watching the fireflies flickering in the yard. The frills of my dress spread out in front of me, my fingers raw from cotton pickin' when I should be entertainin'. Whistlin' dixie, watchin' the parades go by. I'm goin' to tell you 'bout all my gentleman callers, and what a mighty fine howdy-do I had.

"From the picturesque glamour of the old South, a great actress draws the scarlet portrait of a gorgeous spitfire who lived by the wild desire of her untamed heart... The story of a woman who was loved when she should have been whipped... JEZEBEL. Pride of the South that loved her. Shame of the man she loved." *(Trailer for Jezebel, starring Bette Davis).*



-First up, there was Marlon. Brando with his Stanislavskian method acting immersed himself in seedy Polack animalism, Marlon all-man right down to the river of sweat on his T-shirt, which soon developed into the white vest which came to epitomize the American male and his wife beating manhood. Marlon greasy and growling, constantly on heat, incessant scratching of back and belly, vulgar in word and deed, the perfect antidote for the Southern ladies, bored of their Rhetts and Butlers and duels at dawn; Marlon instead with his smoky parlour games strictly for the men, his peculiarly feminine eyes and animal cries up to the balcony in the middle of the night.

"Don't you just love those long rainy afternoons in New Orleans when an hour isn't just an hour- but a little bit of eternity dropped in your hands- and who knows what to do with it?" *(Blanche in A Streetcar Named Desire)*

Marlon knew exactly what to do with that piece of eternity; card games, hard liquor and hot sex. Clark Gable couldn't whip Vivien Leigh into line the same way Marlon did that night....

*But what a lovely way to burn...*

-Fever, yellow jack. Hot sex, New Orleans, the swamps, jazz and voodoo. It was too much. Decaying into the Mississippi swamps, Blanche Debois placing a paper lantern over the naked, vulgar light bulb, but she couldn't hide it. I've always preferred Vivien Leigh in her fallen glory to spoilt Scarlett, rather her vampish caricature to the original; as for Marlon, he never again equalled that night, and grew fat and self important....



"Invitations poured in- parties all over the Delta! -'Stay in bed,' said mother, 'you have fever!'- but I just wouldn't. -I took quinine but kept on going, going! -Evenings, dances! -Afternoons, long long rides! Picnics, -lovely! -So lovely, that country in May. - All lacy with dogwood, literally flooded with jonquils! -That was the spring I had the craze for jonquils- jonquils became an absolute obsession. Mother said, 'Honey, there's no more room for jonquils,' and still I kept on bringing in more jonquils." -(Amanda in *The Glass Menagerie*)

Immersed in fever, the plantations gone, fallen into animal ways, I roamed New Orleans like a tom cat on heat, finally winding up in Storeyville where the negro females taught me the ways of woman. All this time I had been learning how to be a lady was of no consequence now. worse than if I'd gone and wore red to the ball, Marlon had fixed that proper... Them niggers had to hide their sexuality like Mammie's red petticoat and play themselves as big mamas, earth mothers with big grins and drunk/stoned singing darkies contented as long as they had their hands busy. It aint fittin' ma'am, it jist aint fittin', to have those darkies loose and thinkin' 'bout our white women. Mammie became the mother of Tom and Jerry with apron and broom, coz she was too damn hot, too animal, to be wiggling her hips with the honky tonk man. 'Oh, lady, that's shakin' the shimmy shawobble,' -the white girls in their white frocks at their debutante balls had a nap in the afternoon and dreamt of virile black cock and grass and jazz music. We's had the rhythm of the swamps in our bones, we couldn't take a walk down the street but the delicate young things wouldn't gasp in shock at our suggestiveness. It was in the New Orleans cathouse where I learnt to walk and move like a woman, shakin' sex in my movements and in my bones.

"Can you hear them? The night noises? The mocking bird and the magnolia. See the moss hanging from the moonlight. You can fairly taste the night, can't you? You're part of it, Pres, and it's part of you- like I am. You can't get away from us. We're both in your blood. This is the country you were born to Pres. The country you know and trust. Amy wouldn't understand. She'd think there'd be snakes. Oh, it isn't tame and easy like the north. It's quick and dangerous! But you trust it. Remember how the fever mist smells in the bottoms- rank and rotten. But you trust that, too- because it's part of you, Pres. Just as I'm part of you."

-(Bette Davis in *Jezebel*)

-I might have stayed in that whore-house for the rest of my days, if a certain traveling cowboy had not visited me one day. He was on the wrong side of the tracks for his western ways, and I was kinda intrigued so I took a job on a Mississippi steamboat he was heading out towards Kentucky on.



He gambled while I danced in the chorus for the evening's entertainment. Then it was time for him to leave and I was hooked; I rode out towards Arizona with the guy. I knew it wouldn't last and he would ride out of my life just as suddenly as he'd rode in, but I didn't care.

**Thomas!**



When it came down to it, even with the wisdom I had gained in New Orleans, I was just a simple country girl, and this particular beau was just a good ole country boy. Clint Eastwood rode into my life "When I was looking for a miracle, and I looked and

beheld a pale horse, and the name that sat on him was death, and hell followed with him". A preacher man like none I'd ever met before, he didn't treat me like a lady, but he sure made me feel like a woman.

I worked upstairs in a saloon in a little goldrush town foresaken by the law, where the men were hoodlums and outlaws, the sheriff was as crooked as the rest, and the only women were whores. The boys and I would have a crap game, or poker or sumpin, drinkin' hard liquor- at which point Clint would always start a fight with one small gesture and as sure as if he'd flicked a switch all mighty chaos would ensue. Bottles, bodies and chairs were flung across that bar. Saloon society. Boy, I loved it.

"(Eastwood is) slow, calm. rather like a cat... a little sophisticated, a little light." (Sergio Leone). "...I looked at him and didn't see any character... just a physical figure."

He didn't talk much, but when he did it was always the kind of class line everyone else wishes they'd come out with. He'd just stand there, a battered hat shadowing part of his weathered, collected face, smokin' a cee-gar or chewin' tobacco, and he'd spit it out at his feet. Stomp. Yup, I reckon that was a put down, mister. Clint was a man of action, not words.

"Now if you apologize like I know you're going to, I might convince him you didn't mean it."

"When a man with a 45 meets a man with a rifle, the man with the pistol will be dead- that's an old Mexican proverb," (both from *A Fistful of Dollars*)

-Clint soon disproved that theory. His trusty 45 pushed him through enough Westerns and cop films and enough women who all knew what that gun represented. He sure was a quick draw, but he could keep the tension going, too. He could keep that heat, hold that stare for as long as it took. Then- bam! Bam! Clint never stuck to those cowboy rules of etiquette.

It was said that Leone turned his self-sufficient and calm toughness into a kind of ritualized, stylized and heavily gestured masculinity, with a series of close-ups of faces, costumes and gestures. His slightly furrowed brow, eyes the suggestion of squinting, legs apart, the tiniest of movements. Quintessential Clint. Never once raising his voice, alternating the tone of his inflection. It was soon to be all about guns when it came to Clint; fetishizing them, heavy in the foreground, being cleaned. The tiny movements of hands upon them. He always shot the same way, with the flat of his fist, both hands on the gun, a rapid succession of shots. No-one ever told Clint the man with a 45 would lose again. "A man who essentially stands for nothing but violence." (Pauline Kael)



Yup. There were no false sentiments with Clint. You knew what you were getting. Allegiance to no-one. He'd ride off at the end leaving nothing, no facade of caring about the community. He didn't listen to no 2-bit sheriff- in Westerns, it is natural law, not civic law, which counts. And Clint would enforce that.

Clint never had no big action hero muscles, but he was my action hero. Why, even his name's American sounding. It's been said that he 'generated 2 qualities; virility and vulnerability'. Like all cowboys, he'd sleep with his boots on and rest em on the table like he was born in a barn. But I wouldn't want no gentleman, jist a simple ole' country boy with a bootlace tie who'd never expect a woman to pay for her meal. "No-one talks like that about a cowboy." Cowboys are the great American institution, and you cannot speak ill of such things.

"Eastwood doesn't act in motion pictures; he is framed in them... (he is) the perfect physical specter (sic) haunting a world." (*Paul Smith in his book on Clint*).

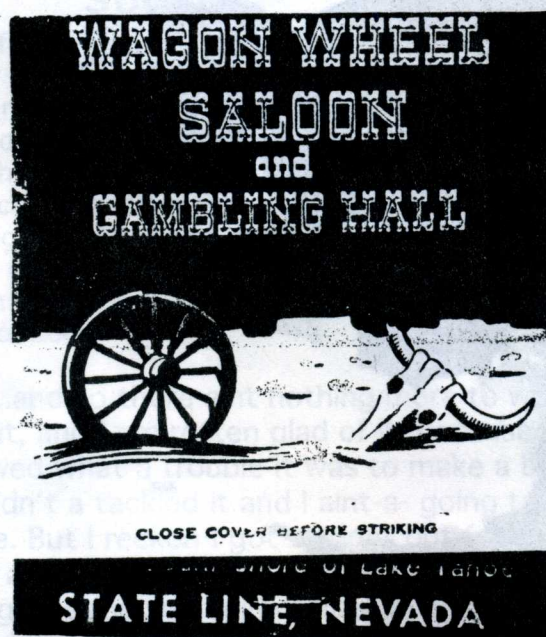
My favourite Clint film is *Pale Rider*, perhaps firstly because he's got better looking with age, more rugged, more weathered, more like a real cowboy. Perhaps I also, unlike the spaghetti western diehards, prefer a moral tale, and *Pale Rider* is loaded with classic, mythic western cliches; mainly though I'm drawn to the sexual tension between Clint and the young girl, Megan, the mystery of the preacher man who aint like no christian I've ever met. There's a painting by Valesquez entitled 'Christ in the Home of Martha and Mary' which illustrates the tension created between the 2 sisters by the unseen prophet; this is exactly what Clint creates when mother and daughter both want to fuck him. In many of his films, women get hot under the collar when he walks into town. He is the Western hero for women.

Big Mexican guy: "You mean you don't admire peace?"

Clint: "It's not really easy to like something you know nothing about,"

Clint: "When a man's got money in his pocket he begins to understand peace,"  
(*from A Fistful of Dollars*)

"In my childhood, America was like a religion... I dreamed of the wide, open spaces... the great expanses of desert, the extraordinary melting pot... The long, straight roads... which begin nowhere, and end nowhere, for their function is to cross the whole continent. Then real-life Americans abruptly entered my life- in jeeps- and upset all my dreams... They were no longer the Americans of the West. They were soldiers... materialist, possessive, keen on pleasures and earthly goods... I could see nothing that I had seen in Hemingway, Dos Passos or Chandler... Nothing- or almost nothing- of the great prairies, or demi-gods of my childhood."  
(*Sergio Leone*).



Leone's westerns are an America made in Italy, a parody of America even better than the real thing. His cowboys have nothing to do with the civil war, don't care about laws or soldiers; they are their own men, outlaws, like pirates and gangsters. Forget John Wayne. Forget patriotism and the star-spangled banner. Rather the hispanicization of the West, the Mexicans with their big sombreros, huge moustaches and shifty, loud laughter. Boots with stars on the heels, flared pants and cool music. The hot hispanic blood of America, a Chicano beau with slicked back hair, gettin' hot in the back of his lowrider... Mucho muchacha! But he'd be a good catholic boy and I'd soon end up with lotsa li'l chicano chics pulling at my skirts- yeah, I guess that's another man, another story...



-I was shimmying when I should have been shuffling and there were many who hushed and talked and tutted. So now I crossed many states again, and found that what gets a simple southern country girl hot most is a greasy yankee city boy. Yup, I went to Noo Yawk, and they sho' do have mighty strange customs in the north, yessir. In the East there were no cowboys, but gangsters -Italians, Jews, Irish. Mobsters with big families, mafia connections and a grandmother like Sophia from the Golden Girls. Robert de Niro impressed me immediately because I like a man that dresses smart and he had only the very best in suits. He had quite a number- silky lamé ones, all different colours, all hung-up in a walk-in wardrobe; he also had the very best in interior decorating. And that certain look on his face, it got me every time, I'd always believed him, came back to him. No matter what he'd done. I knew he shot people. I knew he slept around, stole, embezzled, was corrupt. I couldn't blame it on the crowd he hung out with, 'cause he didn't take no orders from nobody. I told myself he was the mediator, "I'm sorry, you were a little bit out of order," -a little bit older, a little bit cooler. He'd kill all the same, but at least it was *organasized*. Naw, that look. I always took his side.

"Jimmy was the kind of guy who always rooted for the bad guys in the movies."  
(from *Goodfellas*)

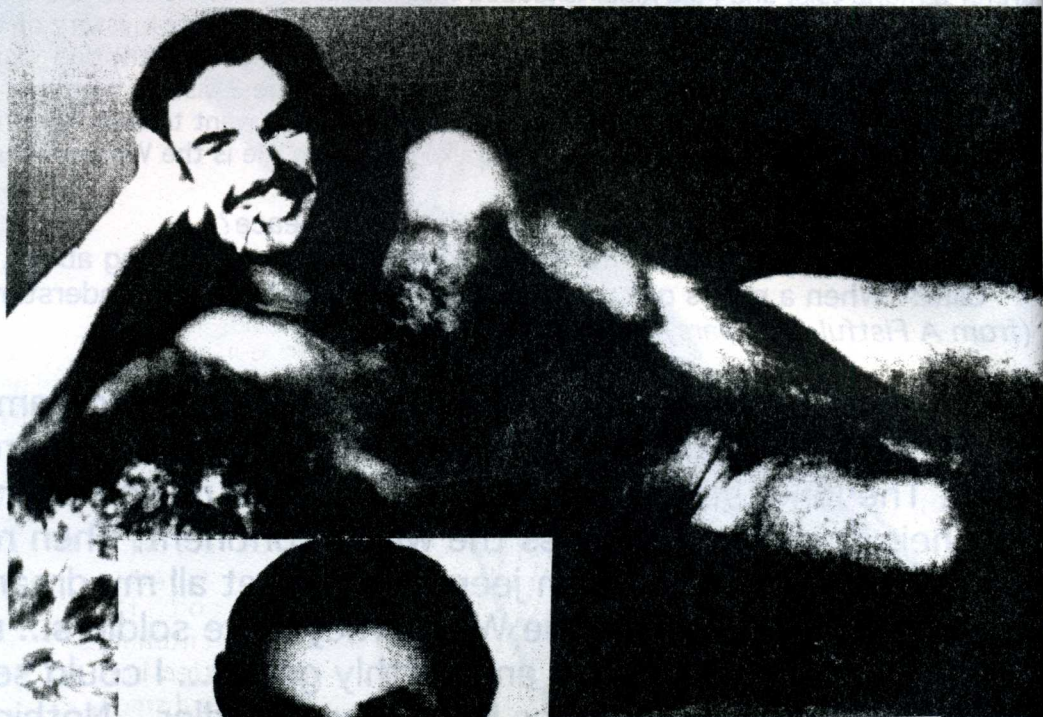
Between them, De Niro and Scorsese made prohibition and the mafia glamorous. Why, those crazy Italians cum Jews cum Irish made the Krays and English attempts look like the shit they were. These boys never had to wait around in queues. They had slicked back hair, sideburns and stoopid nicknames. It was about family. And respect.

I was a gangster's moll. Playing queen to Bob's king, there was always passion. There were crazy fights, but hell, that aggression was refreshing after Clint. It was argumentative, fast -we never spoke to each other, we always shouted.

"What da fuck d'you mean?"

With gangsters, the decadence and violence increases in proportion to the length of the collars and the atrocity and extremity of the '70s fashions. Everything just gets bigger... And the men get out of cars without opening the doors!

-But Bob always blew it. "Ya fucked up, ya stoopid shmuk!"





Yup, I had other gentleman callers, of course, with names as American as apple pie, but not as memorable. Robert Redford was too blonde; Paul Newman became about as exciting as his homemade salad dressing; John Wayne was too clumsy and patriotic, and he'd never take off that damned necktie, not to mention that huge chip on his shoulder.

As for Burt Reynolds, well, I'll let Tammy Wynette explain- "Burt has a deep respect for women. He isn't the kind of man who would think wrong of a woman for following her feelings, even on the first date. But the last thing on earth I wanted to be was one of Burt's one- night stands. It's surprising that thinking about it didn't spoil our experience for me, because I knew that if I didn't see him again I would always wonder if I would have been better off remaining his friend instead of becoming his lover. But my uncertainties disappeared in his arms and when we were close I was beyond caring about anything but the pleasure of being with him. it was a unique experience for me, and one that has never happened since."



**Scott**

After all those crazy Americans, my final gentleman caller had none of the *Indiana Jones* adventurer to him, rather the sophistication and charming well- spoken mystery of the Englishman abroad, who speaks a little like the Beatles or Bowie, and has a streak of evil in his impeccable gentlemanly way; like the mysterious stranger in *Gas, Food, Lodging* who knocks up the elder daughter then disappears, the Englishman has no brash brawniness, no crazy moustache. He has another kind of cool.

"..and so there aint nothing more to write about, and I am rotten glad of it, because if I'd a knowed what a trouble it was to make a book I wouldn't a tackled it and I aint-a- going to no more. But I reckon I got to right out for the Territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally she's going to adopt me and civilize me, and I can't stand it. I been there before." (from the *Tales of Huckleberry Finn*, by Mark Twain)

-With Steve McQueen we just didn't connect, maybe another time, another place? ...Little Jimmy Dean, he was a pretty boy, he really was, but too young, too Athena postcard, there weren't enough thrills, he only had eyes for the boys, anyway. -Of the brat pack boys there was really only one- I didn't care for the accusations that Matt Dillon couldn't act, he was a '50s throwback in the '80s, with his dark features and pretty eyelashes like Elvis. He wore a white vest better than anyone since Brando, held his cigarette between forefinger and thumb like a kid learning to be a man, in a world of long-gone drive-in movies and gas stations. We'd meet on Brooklyn fire escapes and make daytrips to Coney Island in the winter when the funfair was all creepy and abandoned.

But inevitably I realized that youth is all very well, but it was the wise old man of America I respected, a little bit crazy, a little bit cynical and eccentric, wanting nothing but a rocking chair out on the porch to look out at the land. I met Harry Dean Stanton in a 24 hour roadside diner where I was waitressing, I gave him free refills, he drank coffee and smoke cheap American cigarettes all night. he had a face as weathered and rugged yet as gentle and understanding looking as the land, genuinely wise, like the saint of truck stops and motel rooms in the middle of nowhere.



**Johnny**



Jack Kerouac believed in Baseball. Holden Caulfield believed in Baseball. And, as an Americanophile dreamer who loved books and music and detested sports, who loved the rich, decaying sweetness as Summer faded to Fall more than Summer itself, I tried to believe in Baseball too.

In 1991, I found myself studying amongst the Autumnal grandeur of upstate New York, one of a small group of pale English types researching dissertations, taking over the college radio station and attempting to get into the local over-21 bars with desperate ruses and fake ID. It was late September, and the Baseball season was drawing to a close, while the Football season loomed up before us, shadowy shoulderpads growing longer across the stands with each passing day. Football, British or American, is the peoples choice, and supporting it is all about beer and tribalism and massed male bonding; but Baseball is spiritually much more like cricket, symbolic of a lost golden age, an idealistic vision of what the country would like to think it stands for. The national pastime. So, while Cricket is very much a game of officers and gentlemen, of village greens, king and country and sporting fair play, so Baseball is about a tradition passed down from father to son, pitching a few balls under the streetlights, one man up there on the mound, finding the best in himself and scoring a home run in the final seconds of the game. Baseball is about poetry and romance and tragedy, and the American dream.

So it was with that nebulous dream in my head that I boarded the Trailways bus to New York City, approximately one hundred miles down interstate 87, through a landscape that bore a strange, uncanny resemblance to the highlands of Scotland. It seemed surreal that somewhere in this wilderness was The City of Cities, but suddenly there they were, the shining white towers of that fabled skyline, and the tarnished pearl of western civilization was within my reach. We entered the ancient fortress through a maze of tunnels and underpasses before docking at Port Authority and wandering out, dazed and overwhelmed, into a Frank Miller comic book. Steam really did rise out of the manhole covers. Bodies were laid out on the sidewalk, beggars sat with poetry written on blackboards, and every other step was spent dodging bag ladies and vicious, honking yellow cabs. There were probably alligators in the sewers and superheroes doing battle on top of the skyscrapers.

We got the subway to Canal Street, where we'd arranged to stay with a friend of a friend in a loft apartment (where else?). After dumping our stuff, we went to a bar for a pizza. It was raining hard, and as we walked through the door we heard the radio say that Dr. Seuss had died, but that the Mets game was still on. I thought of The Cat in The Hat wandering around the Village, lost and alone. "It's as if America had suddenly lost her childhood," the announcer said.

Seven O' Clock, and time to set out to the game. As we rose once more out of the subway, Shea Stadium loomed up before us like the Starship Enterprise. Floodlights illuminated the drizzle as though scouring the neighbourhood for life, and once inside the green of the diamond seemed unearthly, like some mystic shamrock glowing underground, guarded unto death by the friendly Irish cops in their full length oilskins, parading slowly up and down at the front. The air was thick with ritual and expectation, as fathers and sons in matching caps bought hot dogs and cokes and took their seats, comparing trivia and details of the season so far. Everyone waiting. Will the game go ahead or won't it?

As it turned out, it didn't. Rain stopped play, and as we left we were told that we could send back our tickets for refunds, but it barely registered. We headed back to The Village, past Grandpa Munsters restaurant, peering in to see if the old count himself was in attendance, and ended up in some bar with a ramshackle band playing Dylan covers. As we waited for the train back to Canal Street, a woman busker sang a haunted lament that echoed round the steel beams which held up the ground. Two City workmen were busy repainting them, while in the shadows the homeless slept unnoticed, and on the bench opposite two queers were locked in a passionate embrace.

The next day we went to see a girl who lived in Trump Plaza, walked through Central Park and got offered dope four times in five minutes in Washington Square. In the evening we ate Italian off Times Square, saw Public Enemy make some muthafuckin' noise at the Ritz, and the following afternoon Nirvana appeared in store at Tower records, promoting "Nevermind", their new LP, but our bus left at noon.

All American life is there in Baseball. The fetishism of its physical symbols: the diameter of the ball, the pitchers glove, the bat made only from Northern White Ash. The hitter on the mound, facing down the pitcher, mano a mano, like the old western gunfighters. The drama, the traditions, that permeate everywhere from getting to first base with a girl to Bill Clintons "three strikes and you're out" policy. Collecting cards with all the heroes of the game- Babe Ruth, Joe Demaggio, Ted Williams, Willie Mays. "When I couldn't talk to my Dad about anything else, we could always talk about Baseball."

I tried to believe in Baseball, like I tried to believe in America. It's not Baseball's fault that the rain came down, and I missed the last game of the season, just like it's not America's fault that Dr. Seuss is dead, and Kurt Cobain is dead, and dreams are washed down the gutter for a handful of dollar bills.

I still kept the ticket.

-Ben Graham.

(Ben does a zine himself. It's called News From Nowhere. I think he's working on no.3 now.)



## Englishness begins with the BBC and Wendy Craig, and the offer, which

should not be refused, of a nice cup of tea. Personally I'm all for this great British custom. In times of crisis, a cup of tea'll always help. It may not magically make everything better, but it helps when you don't know what else to do, when something awful's happened and *what do you say?*; someone's appeared on the doorstep out of the blue, *why are they here?* -offer them a cup of tea whilst planning how to deal with the situation. Putting the kettle on, an almost automatic reaction, a safety mechanism, "*Would you like a cup of tea?*" When you've been crying your eyes out, a comforting hug and a gentle, "*Come on, let's get your face cleaned up and then come downstairs and I'll make you a nice cup of tea,*"

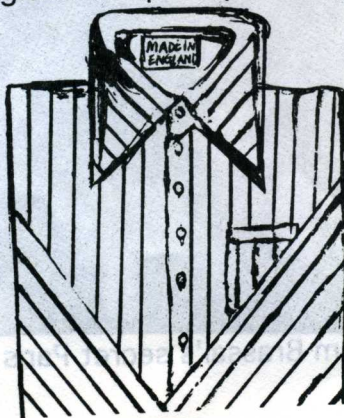
- "Kettle's boiled,"
- "Is it soft enough to eat yet?"

And of course the archtypal English man as seen by the Americans is *Benson*, the butler. The English make excellent butlers because they like to dress smartly and make endless cups of tea.

Englishness is talking about the weather and incessantly about pets. English men with big hands and big feet, the posh type. Yuk. The English habit, so Blue Peter, of referring to commodoties using a generic term rather than a brand name. Let's not have any of that advertizing, let's get the clear sticky tape out-in America they say band aid, kotex, kleenex. England has the BBC and Wendy Craig to make sure that kind of thing doesn't happen.

Englishness is about being more English than the English, which is called colonialism. Grown men dressed in white boots, cream flannels and schoolboy caps to play cricket. In 1937, 5,000 West Indians in Harlem turned out for a ball to celebrate the coronation of king George 6th, with ticket prices in shillings and pence and a pageant in which the coronation ceremony was re-enacted.

I know someone who likes to wear pyjamas because he likes to have that ritual of putting them on every night. Knowing that it's bedtime. I like the ritual of saying, 'goodnight,' because switching-the-light-out-and-going-to-sleep still scares me a little; pyjamas are part of the ritual like tea is. Both are the backbone of the Empire. how we won the war. Pyjamas, folded neatly on her bed, her night-clothes on one side, yours on the other- and you know that means you're going to stay the night. Surely heroin would not have fallen into disrepute had it not stayed in the realm of opium parties frequented by suave Chinesemen in exquisite smoking jackets, inviting English roses and lilies in the form of naive chorus girls to relax on their chaise longues. In their exquisite smoking jackets to pluck their fragile English petals, break their blossoms.... but of course these chorus girls must bring their pyjamas, because it was always *de rigeur* to wear pyjamas to orgies and opium parties...



**sassy chicks,  
spunky gals,  
English roses  
& dime store  
floozyes...**

Ally Sheedy was cool. Ally Sheedy in *The Breakfast Club* didn't talk. She looked so cool. Black shit all round her eyes. Fluffy hair and fringe covering half her face like she didn't give a fuck. After I watched that the first time I wore my white ankle socks with my black tights and black pumps just like she did. I was 15 and I wanted to be like her. I felt proud to go to school all in black and bagginess. But one thing fucked it up. I fucked it up just like Ally Sheedy did at the end of the film, I just couldn't retain that level of cool, couldn't carry that rebel-freak thing far enough, silent and enigmatic. I'd always bumble and waffle, *brash Northern lass* that I was. I guess we both blew it.

I had a friend who reminded me of Sissy Spacek. I thought she was just so cool. I wanted to be like her too. Finally I got to know her and she wasn't all that interesting after all, but aint that always the way? What was it about Sissy Spacek? Her funny Southern accent and a kind of strong fragile vulnerability and this sort of stoned nonchalance about everything.

Reading *Ramona* books as a kid, I never knew what bangs were; Ramona was Mr. Quimby's spunky gal. Ramona, besides having a hole in her house for Show and Tell, has band-aids for blisters and



knows the following grown-up words; gas, motel, burger. I was both mesmerized and mystified by her Americanisms of everyday things. She always wants to 'boing' Susan's hair in class, because Susan is goody-goody, and has her hair in ring lets. "Boing!"

"Buck up, Ramona," said Mr. Quimby. "Show us your spunk,"

Now, I still emulate people. I want to have class. **Who has class?** Natalie Wood had class. Even Drew Barrymore has class, in a trashy, American kind of way. But to be English, and have class, American confidence is rejected in favour of the **English rose**.

- *What is it about English men and posh birds?*

It's not about hating women just because they've got tiny tits. I resent their self-assuredness, that of someone who can wait and take the things that come to them in their own time, with appropriate grace and courtesy, while I must grab and fall and make a mess; I resent the way they just sidle effortlessly into situations as they do a Laura Ashley dress without so much as a broken fingernail.

There are some names that just can't be sullied or tarnished; the word 'Imogen', for instance, cannot be emitted from the mouth of a white trash slapper, and screeched across the council estate- "Imogen, get 'ere!" -*It just can't.*

Their hair always just so; their tits small yet perfectly formed; pert noses and just the hint of freckles, not to mention perfect skin.

It's not the same with affluent English men, with their awkwardness and clumsy big hands/ feet thing. Just what is it about posh birds? And is it just an English thing?

My upbringing is too crazy

and probably irrelevant to matter here, but I had sporadic bursts of obsessive emulation of a fictional or historical character (for instance, Boudicea), in my down-to-earth area I lived, though not so my family. How I wanted to be and who I was, were probably both way out of context.

"*The honey in her lilting Southern accent was decidedly absent,*" (the ex-Tennessee beauty queen asks Elvis why he's trying to kill her) -yeah, sure I want to be classy, but life is hard, honey. What does it mean to try to be classy but to end up a 'leggy Northern lass?'

Stripping isn't about being good-looking. It's about being as common and as vulgar and as hard as you can. Threatening to put windows through. Mae West wanted to be a lion tamer- I think she'd seen the similarities in occupations whilst doing the burlesque houses.

*"I like smooth shiny girls, hard boiled and loaded with sin," (Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe in Farewell My Lovely)*



pro from Brassai's secret Paris of the '30s



So we're in the dressing room and the girl I'm on with today's just pulled out her bloody tampon and practically flicked him in the eye with it; it was, we agreed, one way to get the fool of the com-pere to get the message and piss off. It's hardly Monte Carlo, and I manage to pull down half the

glitzy curtain with my bag as I'm leaving.

The hippy I was picked up by hitching told me as we shared a joint that he'd worked for 7 years in casinos. Promoted from cro-prier to working tables, to standing between tables, at which point he noticed 'these huge things on the end of my arms hanging useless, not knowing what to do with them,' -He was now a social worker.

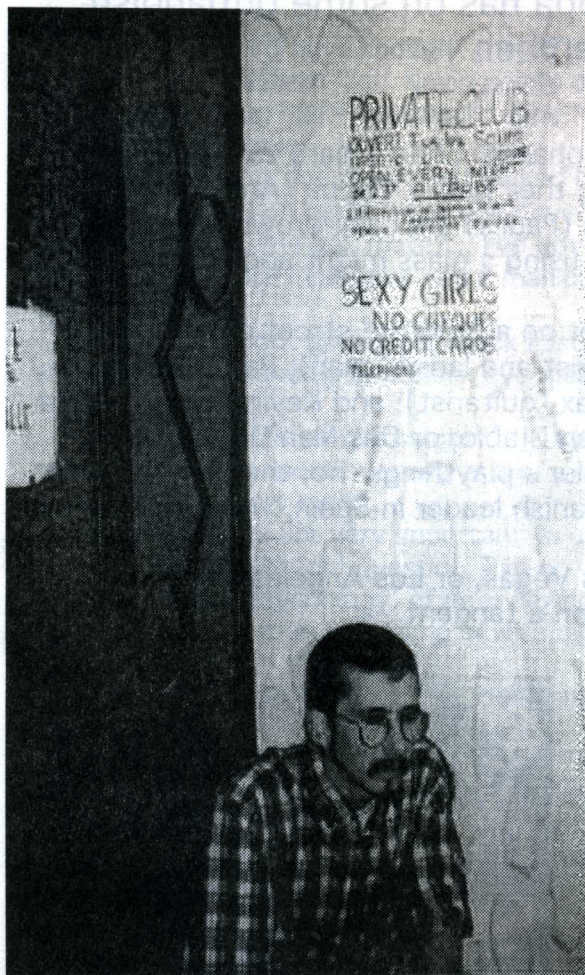
When a residency in Blackpool can mean a drag act in front of a roomful of nazis praying his fag jokes won't backfire, who needs Liza Minelli for the spirit of 1930s Berlin?



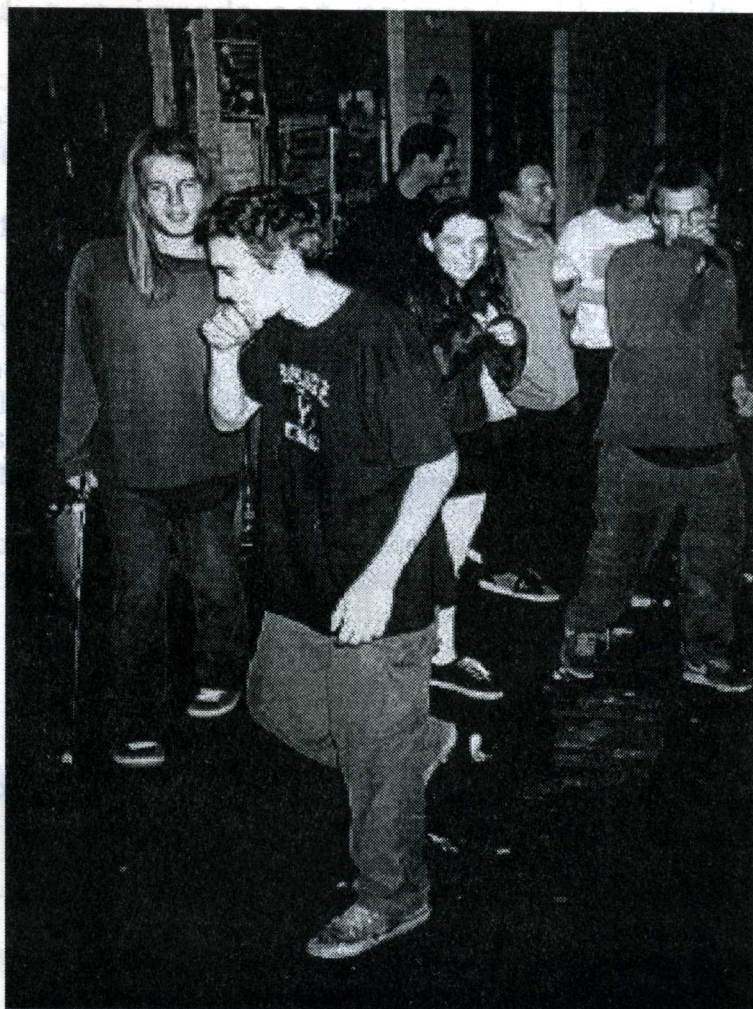
At a minimum height of 5 ft. 9 for a bluebell girl, I'm 1 and a half inches short- but if the Civic theatre in Halifax was used for the Folies Bergere of the '30s in the TV drama 'Bluebell', with Leeds extras in evening dress as the affluent audience, then anything is possible. The BBC's taste for the period and dancing girls was impeccable; in the '90s we have Showgirls. What Miss Bluebell, who has sent girls to Vegas, (or for that matter Carolyn Pickles, relation to Judge and Wilfred (Portman and) Pickles, who played Miss Bluebell in the series), thought to that film is debatable; "From the start she was determined that her troupes should be the elite of dancers, and that in spite of the glamour, exposure and sexuality of their stage appearance there would be nothing cheap or sleazy about the girls themselves." Of course, "Bluebell never forces a girl to bare herself if she does not want to, but if she does her breasts must be firm, round and attractive, not pendulous or miniscule, considerations which the girls readily accept." (both quotes from the authorised biog of Miss Bluebell, Margaret Kelly).



Above:- Sned looks sad at Baby Harp Seal's final gig, he's all cut up inside man, while, below, the Leeds 6 posse hang out in the place-to-be 1 in 12 alleyway, why do they look like they've all turned round at once?

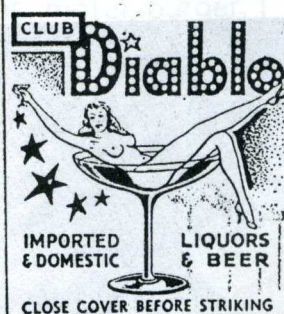


Anthony P. proves Monte Carlo aint what it used to be





PHONE 2018



# Des Man Deablo

I'm outside the Leadmill in Sheffield waiting for the doors to open, shortly before being discovered attempting to smuggle a half bottle of vodka inside, "Just put it back in your bag and leave em in the cloakroom- and make sure you do," I'm told, unconvincingly -when a black hackney cab pulls up and 4 well dressed, suave young men swagger to the front of the queue, "We're on the guest list," and strutt in- "Who'd get a taxi to a Girls against Boys gig?" I ask. It is the Deablo boys, top sultry scouse sleaze rock band, and fine wearers of pants. I am impressed.

Later on I am at the Leadmill again. Rocket from the Crypt put on a very good show, look swanky, and I like a good show. Apart from my brother who I have come with, I know no-one here save the Des Man boys. I promise the interview will happen soon- we set a date at the July 1 in 12 h/c fest Des Man Deablo are due to play. Cappa has on some outlandish shirt and is charming, too charming, as I remember.

It's now Sunday the 21st July. It's hot and I'm feeling phased. I find it hard to be as chatty as I could be. Des Man Deablo are pre-gig and I'm noticing their pants. Cappa (Andy's) are brown *spencers* style work pants, worn with chain, Flecka (Paul's) are cack-brown cords. The former is downing white wine. It's a good start, but I feel using a glass might add to its stylishness.

The interview is conducted at the top of Albion Street on a Bradford street corner. We have- myself; Andy/ Cappa (classy dresser, singer/ guitarist and ladies' man); Paul/ Flecka/ Latido Espangnol (drummer and professional scouser); Max (guitarist); and Kevin (bass). I start with a boring question which is bothering me- is it Des Man *Di*ablo, or Des Man *De*ablo? Coz, I elaborate, the former brings forth images of infernal juggler's playthings- no, they say, it's the latter, which is the name (explains Andy) of a "mystic Spanish leader in Spain," Aha. And, which is more Des Man Deablo, Blackpool or Las Vegas?

Paul:- At one time it'd have been Blackpool, now Las Vegas, or Los Angeles...

"We're bigger than any band ever," Andy heads off on a tangent.

"We'd rather play Las Vegas, to be honest, coz obviously the money's better.... but then again I don't mind, I'll play in Blackpool, I'll play in Las Vegas..." interjects Kevin.

I was trying to grasp more of a metaphorical idea- but not to worry. Trying a different peg, I ask, "Is Blackpool the Las Vegas of England?"

(someone) "Oh, no,"

Andy:- Southport is the Las Vegas of England-

I ask if Southport was built by the mafia, or whether they bury people under the beach. The answer is inaudible and probably irrelevant. I guess it's possible.





Andy, I know, writes for a Southport newspaper. I ask him if he occasionally fabricates the truth somewhat, and if so, what like?

"Sometimes I make them(stories) up. (One was) about a tree worshipping cult that lived in Formby and there was a picture of me and my mate on the front of the paper and it was me and my mate and I made it up. It went to 78,000 homes in Southport, Formby, Ormskirk and Skelmersdale.

Me:- And did people believe it?

"I think they did, yeah- Radio Merseyside rang me up and said will you tell me the story and... er, I didn't make it up, actually, it was true!" he laughs.

Changing the subject, I ask why top Preston personality 'Frosty' left the band?

"Dunno really," answers Paul. "College and stuff," Andy concurs. "But you told me," I glare at Paul, "It was coz of his girlfriend,"

But Paul is more diplomatic 'on the record'. It was more to do with college really- he'd just joined university,"

Andy:- He wanted to study rock and we wanted to play rock (Frosty is doing a geology degree).

I ask Paul why it is different for him, as he's on the same fine art course as me- "Well, I'm doing art, aren't I? So I don't have to do anything, I can pass anything off. He has to study and take exams and stuff, I don't have to do anything like that. I get to swan off and live in Spain for 2 months.... When I first joined I was gonna leave coz I thought I wouldn't be able to do it, but the boys have been understanding..."

Andy:- We're the most understanding people you will ever meet!

-I asked if the boys were really seriously considering relocating to Sheffield, as I'd heard, and if so- why?

Paul:- We don't have to become part of any scene, it's like Liverpool's a strong music city, Sheffield's not a strong music city at all-

"So that's your theory," I attempt to clarify. "Sheffield has no scene and nothing goes on.."

Paul:- There's no scene for me-

Andy:- It's nice, It's a lot nicer as well, (I disagree) -I think it's nice- nice and quiet.

I ask why no-one in the band has sideburns. Half the band go in unison, "I have!" while the other pair ask, "Why?"

I explain that I'd have thought they'd be *that kind of band*.

"I'm a clean-shaven lad!" Kevin points out.

"We're wearing make-up tonight Jane," Andy confides, seeming anxious to sidestep the political hot potato sideburn issue.

"Are yer? What about gel, and slicked back hair?" I ask.

"I've got some on me, " helps out Kevin.

"D'you want some gel, mate?... I've got a boudoir in my bag- I can give you a manicure as well..."

Andy:- We've got glitter gel, black lipstick and black face make-up and black eye make-up and nylon slacks...

"What is it with pants tonight?" I ask, referring to afore mentioned leg attire.

Paul:- It's every night...

Andy:- Clothes are very important to us..

-I ask my big 'tough' question. I've no concept of the 'psychology' of interviewing, or of 'curling' a question, so I jump in with big boots, Gaby Roslin style.

"Do you not think you're, like, becoming a bit of a Girls Against Boys tribute band?"

Angry denying from Max and Kevin. "To that question, I say, 'Fuck off!'" goes Andy. I try to elaborate. "It's just like, when I first saw you in Leeds, you were a lot different from when I saw you the 2nd time (there)"..

Kevin:- In what way?

Me:- I think it was the keyboard-

Kevin:- We didn't even have the keyboard in Leeds!

Me:- You did when you played the Fenton-





Paul:- Thing is, though, Girls Against Boys are a band that people know now... Girls Against Boys sound like the Fall, Girls Against Boys sound like Joy Division, Girls Against Boys sound like Wire...

Andy agrees, "it's a mixture of the Fall, Joy Division, Wire..."

"That makes em sound like shit!" I burble.

"No it doesn't, it makes em sound fuckin ace!" someone argues.

"We're going in a more Silly and the Family Stone direction at the moment..." Andy reckons.

"No," Kev points out. "We're just going in a Des Man direction, really,"

"I just don't think that you should deliberately sound like em... (I'm fighting a losing battle to get them off the defensive)

Kevin (touchy):- We're not, we're not at all-

"I used to say we sounded like that," muses Paul, "but it was only coz we were growing as musicians,"

Andy:- I think people just say you're like whatever they know like, y'know what I mean... I think we sound like Danzig! (surely that was latter-day Fabric?)

"I just thought," (I'm still trying- give it up, Jane!) "it was like after the last tour, it was an obvious thing like- like you'd just seen em and-

"Seen em?" snorts Kevin. "We saw em about 5 years ago!"

Me:- No, I didn't mean like that, I just meant this particular tour...

Max:- Well, we found out that they'd been signed to Geffen and we thought we'd go in that direction, we thought that'd be the way to go...

Andy:- We'll do anything to be rich and famous. That's what tarts we are, we'd sound like Anthrax to get famous-

"What are you doing tonight then?" I ask, thinking rock star excess is on the cards.

"Going home," says Kevin.

"Are you going straight off in your helicopter to your V.I.P. hotel room?"

"Yeah, we've got a private helicopter," confides Paul. "A helicopter is gonna take us to the airport, then to the South of France, and that's where our girls are,"

Kevin:- (We) do one show a month and then relax...

Paul feels the need to justify decadence (I say, decadence needs no justification!) -"It's like, if you've got a skill, you wanna get paid for it, you don't want it as a hobby, whereas a lot of the bands playing here, it'll be a lifestyle or a hobby, and if it's a lifestyle, it's like a job, doing it everyday, and I don't wanna do that, and keep signing on or doing a job, I wanna be able to live off it, coz there is money to be made somewhere..."

"People who fuckin diss bands for fuckin signing, it's rubbish, coz you get in so much shit with record companies, that's how you do it, you have to sign so many albums... that's how you do it, it's like a job..." Andy's off on the 'sell out' thing. I don't care. Leave that to the 'music' zines. I ask him to change the subject. America and prostitution, anyone?

Andy:- I think America is alright, but last time I went I didn't like it. I liked Disneyland...

"Universal studios is alright too," (dunno who said that)

Max:- Prostitution, I don't mind. Never had much to do with it, though. Depends where you go- went to a place in Manchester-

"None of you have ever been with a prostitute then?" I interrupt. No, they all reply.

"I'll tell you a story about a nameless person that I know, (who) went to a prostitute..." starts Paul.

"Boring story really," Andy interjects.

"In Holland?" I ask.

"No, in Liverpool," Paul continues, "And, er, went into a back alley with her, and she starts giving him a blow job and he can't come, and she's there about half an hour, and he still hasn't come, so she goes, 'right, you have a wank and, er, feel me tits,' So he did that- No, "you have a wank and I'll play with me tits," so she did that and he's still not coming, so she gives him a blow and tells him to feel her tits, and in the end he just comes a little bit and he walks off and he was there for ages so he got his money's worth,"

I don't get it. "What's the punchline?" I ask.

Kevin:- He said he'd got his money's worth. Paul reiterates this.

-Is that the English attitude to prostitution? Getting your money's worth? Probably. But I marvel at the resilience of the woman- "But he was there for fuckin hours, I'd have fucked him off after 10 minutes!"

"Maybe coz he was drunk it felt like longer," ponders Paul.

"We only want high- class hookers," Kevin interjects.

"What kind of image is that for our band?" scolds Andy. "Kevin going, 'we want high class hookers?'"







Kevin:- No, but you know what I mean, if you're gonna do something, you always do it good- you know what I mean, you're not gonna do it by half measures... I'm not saying I would personally, I'm just saying if you're gonna do it you've gotta do it right...

Andy:- I always say, you have turkey fillet, you have chicken fillet instead of turkey fillet, and you have fillet instead of rump steak... "That says it all," claims Kevin. I am, however, mystified. Flitting topics slightly, just what is it about Burt Reynolds?

Andy:- I love Burt Reynolds.

Paul:- He's like a surrogate dad. I didn't have a dad..

Max:- He's a very handsome man-

Andy:- He's handsome, he's naturally funny, and he's got a load of money..

Max:- That's what I mean-

Andy:- I read his autobiography and he... he had a bit of a fall-out with Loni Anderson and she sued him for the biggest child support ever recorded in all history...

Paul:- We've got a song named after him about his house in Malibu-

Andy:- Valhalla, he's got a house called Valhalla... The first time he went on a date with Loni, and he took her to Valhalla, he goes, "I took Loni to my house in Malibu, in a helicopter -Valhalla," so that's what our song's about- a date with Loni...

Paul:- They're all the films I liked when I was growing up though...

Me:- What's your favourite Burt Reynolds Film?

All:- Deliverance-

(Other favourites, I can't discern who said what I'm afraid, Hooper, Mean-Machine-)

Andy:- Smokey and the Bandit is obviously a modern classic...

Paul:- I like the film where he's just got this big house and there's nothing in it except his clothes and this pool table with a mattress on it- and he's in bed with this woman and he just goes, "Okay honey, just put your feet in the middle pockets..."

Me:- But what about accusations that he's just a poor man's Clint Eastwood?

-Rubbish, Clint's totally serious, except for Dirty Harry and Magnum Force- great films... (Kevin). You can't compare the two, though-

Andy:- Evening Shade, let's just forget about Evening Shade...

Max:- He was in that sitcom in the early '60s, where he looks really young, he hasn't got his 'tache...

"-You can't have Burt Reynolds without his 'tache!" I object.

Max:- You can, he looks younger...

Andy:- I agree, you can't have that-

(I have since found out that Deliverance stars Burt Reynolds minus moustache, an anomaly too late to rectify)

Max:- You can't have Magnum without a moustache...

Paul:- Magnum is a poor man's Columbo.

-Somehow, we get back to America.

Andy:- We drove across Phoenix and you go to these truck stops and it's honestly just like England... fuckin hicks everywhere...

Are you not more interested in the unreality of it all? I ask.





Andy:- It's more interesting to go there, I think-

Kevin:- Yeah, I think it is... "But," I'm trying here, "You know when there's a shooting in Hull (or some where) and people go, "It's getting like New York round here," D'you think that's really sad?"

All:- It's sad, yeah...

Andy:- Britain is up the arse of America too much and that's why half the shit goes on, coz everyone's copying America- you've got middle class white kids in baseball caps thinking they're hard or whatever, that's what it's getting like, and there's no reason for them to be like that... white kids trying to be hard, with their Ice Cube albums...

-My last question is read off my sheet by Andy- are you a girl's band?

Max:- We try to be- we're very image conscious...

Andy:- We won't play unless we've got lots of hot towels-

Me:- Like, Hard To Swallow, they're more of a boy's band-

Andy:- Can I just say, Hard To Swallow are a fuckin ace band, they've got wahwah pedals, and they're into metal.

-Well, I disagree, but it's my fault for bringing them up. Like I say, a boy's band. I change the subject (ish). -D'you like to make a good show of it, then?

Kev:- If you pay your money, you don't wanna just sit there and be bored out of your mind, do you- you want something to look at and something to listen to.

I agree- what about dancers?

Kev:- Oh yeah, totally. If we had the money, we would.

Paul:- And pyrotechnics.

-What about backdrops and intro tapes?

Paul:- We had an intro tape for tonight but I don't think we're gonna use it..

-Max asks what it was. Paul explains it was Las Vegas grind tapes- "It's like a tape of all the bands that used to back the strippers in Las Vegas," explains Paul. "Put it on," urges Andy.

"You were gonna get me a tape of it so I could use it for me next show," I remind Paul. "In fact, I thought I was gonna strip for you."

Andy:- You can go on tonight if you wanna-

Max and Kevin, mystified ask what's this? I'm not happy. Looking at the other two, I ask- "You've not even discussed it with the band?"

"She was gonna do a strip for us tonight," Andy explains. But, I point out, I haven't got my outfits with me-

Andy:- That can be your, like, punk rock chick sort of outfit...

Me:- No, no, I've got to have my outfit, and I haven't got my shaving foam-

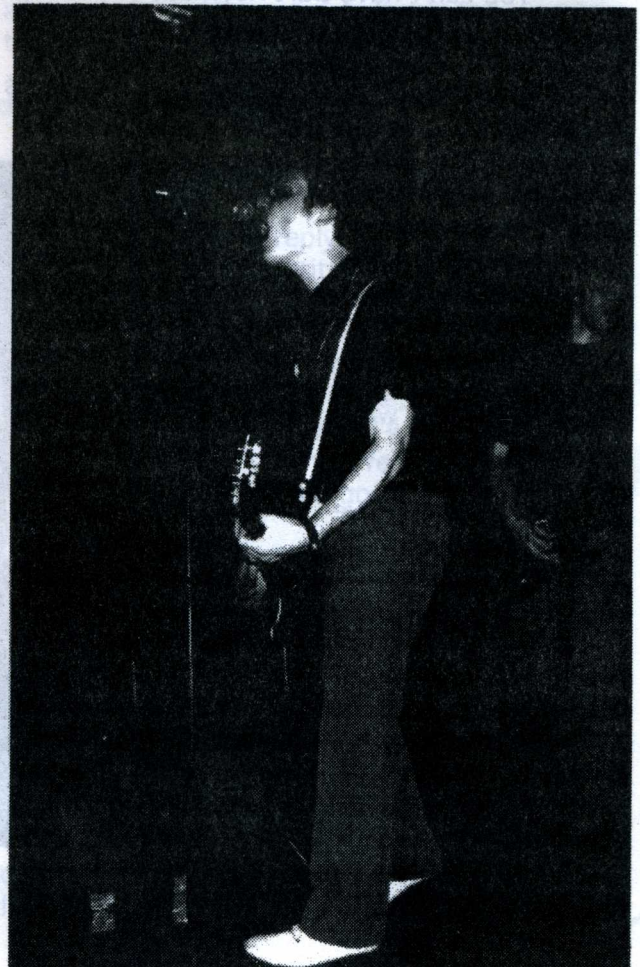
Andy:- What d'you do with that?

Me:- I put it on me tits and stick em in men's faces...

As the band disperse to get set up to play, I ask Paul about his trip to Spain, and if the girls were pretty...

"I went to Northern Spain, I drank all the time I was there... There were a few incidents- I had one in a bar in Madrid, dancing to Shaggy. She had her hand down my pants and I had my hand down her pants and I thought I was gonna get down to it then and there in the middle of the dancefloor..."

Later Des Man Deablo went on, introduced by the reinstated Las Vegas grind tapes, and were indeed dressed in bright coloured pants (red, yellow and green), black eye make-up and, if I may say, the perfect finishing touch being Cappa's white golf shoes. I thoroughly enjoyed their set and they seem to be getting over the obsession (in my eyes) with Girls V. Boys. The set was short, though, possibly due to Cappa's inebriation but also maybe coz his girlfriend was gonna kill him as he'd promised her he'd be home hours ago. (Oh, what about the rock n' roll, boys?) As they left, he chastised me on my limp handshake. That's showbiz for you, not like I'm used to shaking hands. *Well, what d'you expect, for a girl?*





## -Mark Thomas-

When the revolution finally arrives, the one that everyone's in training for, they'll probably let you know by leaving a note in the soya margarine tub... blinkered anarchists' lack of the basic skills of communication, not to mention the ability to have FUN, brings me to mind of Emma Goldman's famous quote, "If I can't dance, it's not my revolution," which I never really thought much of before, hell, I never really enjoyed dancing (till NOW), but the margarine note incident led me to cry, "I don't want your stupid fuckin revolution anyhow!"

Mark Thomas said to me on the phone, "people are so fuckin linear," and he was right. He was referring to an attempt to be genuinely spontaneous and 'wacky' at a commercial festival, in 1996, where such elements are profitably forced to consumers and his experiment in, "throwing something up in the air and let's see where it lands," received cries of, "I don't understand!"

But let's start at the beginning. Of course I am as guilty as most in not having heard of a comic until they end up on channel 4 on Friday night, but the way it's set up has never endeared me to live comedy. Aside from the Bernard Manning style comics who appear between strippers at stag nights, comics generally make their apprenticeship in London cabaret venues and only appear up here when they're big enough for the large, expensive venues- and then they're generally 80% lads, sponsored by Newcastle brown ale or Loaded magazine. -I ought to add as a postscript here that the Lescar in Sheffield holds small comedy nights, but that was something I was never really aware of prior to forthcoming tale. The 'alternative' to me seemed like some Cambridge University revue. I hardly thought *they* were likely to change the situation.

-I'm not a big fan of left-wing comedians, either. It brings to mind my mother's friends, with their, "If Thatcher gets up your nose- picket!" jokes at labour party socials, or Ben Elton in his nauseatingly spangly suit going, "A bit of politics, here". This was not a good mix, I thought.

And Mark Thomas didn't look particularly good from the adverts; I didn't even watch the first episode of his channel 4 show- but the use of Chaos U.K. playing on a float outside McDonalds brought him into conversation with the punkers and soon he became a Friday night treat.

Mark's basic premise is 'outweirding the world' -to answer every crazy obstacle thrown at you with an equally crazy retort, every market researcher with a survey of your own. Although mainly a stand-up comic, his forte on the T.V. show was *scams*. In the '60s Ken Kesey and Abbie Hoffman, no doubt big influences on Mark (there are parallels and it was Mark who recommended reading Hoffman to me)- would have performed *pranks*, but this is no longer the '60s, acid will no longer pave the way to enlightenment and it's Britain, not America, so *scams* will do linguistically. By *scams* I mean bringing drought- ridden Yorkshire water a tanker of donated water 'raised from a benefit single', or blowing the budget for one show on a bet at Donny races, to name but two.

Anyway I wrote to him, not expecting an answer. But I received one and over the summer worked with him at gigs in the North of England and at Pheonix music festival. We went to Hemsworth, where they're more used to Bernard Manning and Billy Pearce and are very proud of telling me such. The following week saw male strippers for the ladies. Mark went down a treat, except with the S.W.P. (who needed to call a meeting and discuss their position on taking a joke) and Arthur Scargill, whose christian beliefs were reputed to have been offended- and they had karaoke afterward. In Sheffield the anarchist/ student crowd weren't quite as much fun and I started to realize that, unlike bands, the same jokes can't be listened to again and again with the same vitality, but the 'good cause' of raising money to help free Fista, who received a 5 year jail sentence for grafitti, seemed to rub off on just about everyone.

Pheonix was about showbusiness and being backstage and masculinity feeling protected by passes and phones and technical equipment. There were no women comedians present. In 3 fuckin days. And I, who am not one to pick up on or feel intimidated by a male atmosphere, felt a distinctly- oppressively so- masculine vibe. I can honestly say though Mark wasn't really part of this showbusiness camaraderie and one of the few who didn't go back to London or stay in a Stratford hotel, who at least made the effort to go with the festival concept, but it made me think. There is some kind of history of d.i.y. in music; how does that fit in with comedy and cabaret?

Because there is a radical, exciting history there that I find so inspiring, so new to me; the band thing has become almost ritualistic in its reviews, interviews, sell out, in-out in-out yeah yeah yeah... Dada and futurist performers provoking their audience; Lenny Bruce using his stage training to treat the court in the same way, playing to his 'audience'; in his trial for having publicly uttered the word 'cocksucker' he showed what a farce it all was, the stony-faced judges really quite enjoying saying the word themselves... Abbie Hoffman, in throwing dollar bills at the stock exchange during the sixties, explained about such acts in his book *Revolution For The Hell Of It* (1968), "rumors (sic) have power- like myths, people become involved in them, adding subtracting, multiplying... If it's spelled out to the letter there's no room for participation. Nobody participates in ideology."

Here is an example of Mark's sense of humour. In the middle of a road in residential Hammersmith he asks his mate to stop the car so we can get out and look at the front of a house, a perfect example, he exclaims, of someone who's proud to have bought their own council house. And this house has these mansion style pillars in front of the door, like a *Gone With The Wind* aristocratic facade completely out of context. We were like Buckingham Palace tourists on an alternative London sight seeing tour...

In the intro to the Re/search book on pranks, it states, "pranks are the deadly enemy of reality. And reality... has always been the supreme control trick used by society to subdue the lust for freedom latent in its citizens." Just as both humour and pranks can be used to reinforce the status quo, the relationship between victim and boss, so can they be used to subvert it. The really sad thing is, this kind of situationist thinking has become so ingrained in anarchist and punk doctrine it has become the kind of fixed ideology it wanted to subvert, even if that does sound like a contradiction in terms. I can read yet another zine with its pleas for me to 'have fun shoplifting' or 'don't work- play', but they've copied it from another source, photocopied half of *Flyposter Frenzy*, and it's hollow, they're unoriginal ideas- no longer creative or imaginative. Situationism must undergo some kind of transformation if it is again to be effective.

With Mark Thomas I see the only comedian I can really see today and in this country using the culture I know and turning it around. When I first saw his T.V. programme I thought, "gee, I wish I had the guts to do that,"- it's all the things I wanted to do as a kid but was simply told *I just couldn't*... Now I think, why not? Why can't I do that too? The only limits I would put on myself now would be to be fresh and original. At his worst Mark is veering towards the school of the left wing comic. At his best, his optimism and imaginative stunts make me realize what my jaded political self had forgotten- that there is more to direct action than running around back streets masked up and hunt-sabbing.



# WUTHERING HEIGHTS

How in god's name did they come to the preposterous conclusion of allowing Cliff Richard to play the part of Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*, one of literature's most sado masochistic creations? Heathcliff, as anyone who has read the novel will know, is not a good man- he's a bitter, vindictive, nasty man, he's not a hero; he's not delicate- he is raw, animal passion- I mean imagine Cliff reciting some of my favourite lines from the novel:-

*"I have no pity! The more the worms writhe, the more I yearn to crush out their entrails! It is a moral teething, and I grind with greater energy, in proportion to the increase of pain,"*

-It's hardly a christian statement.

-No, I have a better idea. No film has ever done justice to the book. It's a book which belongs to the landscape, and Hollywood has always turned the Pennine moors into *Gone With the Wind* hills straight out of a picture of the promised land from *the Watchtower*. The Pennines are where the Moors Murderers picnicked on the graves of their victims; they're not pleasant little hills. Instead of attempting what seems the impossible why not move *Wuthering Heights* to a new but equally chilling wilderness- the cockney Eastend of London. *Wuthering Heights* with its eternal love triangle- Pat Butcher, Frank Butcher and Roy Evans.

When Heathcliff returns, it is to destroy the cosy life that he has built up since he left suddenly, leaving Cathy, who searched and mourned and waited for him until she finally gave up, to marry another- just as happens to Pat when Frank disappears after torching the car lot and finally capitulates to the advances of the jag- driving Roy- who is a good man but cannot move Pat as can Frank. The Butchers know they will always love each other, even through other marriages. Pat Butcher is the local bad woman finally finding her place and peace within the community with Roy, but many still remember her wild youth, her reputation as the local badwoman, the town tramp, her string of sons with different and unknown fathers; she must have been quite a looker in her time.



## ...IN THE CAR-LOT...



*'Well might Catherine deem that heaven would be a land of exile to her, unless with her mortal body she cast away her mortal character also. Her present countenance had a wild vindictiveness in its white cheek, and had a bloodless lip and scintillating eye...'*

The car lot represents an urban, Southern and modern version of a farm such as Wuthering Heights, where cars have replaced horse-power and are a commodity to be fought over. And when Frank returns, it is not only to destroy Pat's peace, but to destroy the community of the entire square, and to throw a shadow of terror over Walford and the Queen Vic.

Just as Cathy and Heathcliff are the moors around Wuthering Heights, Nelly unable to imagine unquiet slumbers for their souls, instead believing their ghosts to roam the land eternally, you could never uproot Pat and Frank from the Eastend and place them elsewhere; without the stereotypes of jellied eels, cockney knees-up and the Lambeth walk they would shrivel and die just as surely as Cathy expires after bearing Edgar a daughter. And when 'diamond geezer' Frank returns it is as if the Eastend landscape has breathed life back into him. He is forsaken by the community, by Roy's doing and the traders at the car auction, just as Heathcliff is. But Frank belongs in this concrete jungle, he's a fighter.

*"The tyrant grinds down his slaves and they don't turn against him; they crush those beneath them. You are welcome to torture me to death for your amusement, only allow me to*

*amuse myself a little in the same style, and refrain from insult as much as you are able,"* (Heathcliff in Wuthering Heights).

On his return, Frank toys with and uses his kids, Ricky and Janine, knowing that they will forgive him and trust him regardless, coz it's 'family'. Just as Heathcliff marries Edgar's sister Isabella who is infatuated with him and toys with her, gains enjoyment from abusing her, Frank has no pity for those who are too weak and gullible. Poor Ricky, nice but dim, will give him anything he asks. He laughs with pity at Roy just as Heathcliff does to Edgar, he knows Pat could never be fulfilled by a man like that, that she needs more, needs passion. Surely Pat's new home decor was Roy's choosing, poor impotent Roy- just as night follows day we know Pat will fuck Frank in the bed she now shares with Roy.

Where did Frank go when he disappeared? Likewise, where did Heathcliff go? Heathcliff left a dirty, uneducated gypsy boy and returned a rich and ruthless business man. Frank left a guilt-ridden man driven to desperate acts, hard liquor and at breaking point. And when he returns, no-one is sure if he is still sick.



*-Is he a man? If so, is he mad? If not, is he a devil?*

When Frank returns to the Queen Vic he has come home, and the old Frank is back. The classic character, the laugh, the way he says, "Whoah," the way he removes his glasses and rubs his brow, the way he calls Bianca "princess," as he used to call Diane. He's not sick, and it's frightening the locals. The old Frank is back, and it's showdown at the car lot. Just as Wuthering Heights is a lawless place left to the moors, so too does natural justice prevail in the Eastend, and certainly in the land of used car dealers.

*"Is Mr. Heathcliff a man? If so, is he mad? And if not, is he a devil?"* (Isabella in Wuthering Heights).

Heathcliff is a misanthrope. And Cathy is a spoilt, wilful girl who plays with men. And though neither are good, Christian characters, they are the kind of people that women and men fall in love with. The goodie never got anyone hot. It is the promise of the devil inside the angel, breaking the petals of the English rose, that attracts us. Or of ourselves having our petals ripped apart.

Eastenders have always had an obsession with a kind of Krays-style Eastend glamour, bringing in the Mitchell boys, pushing at this idea of a complete devotion to their mum. Classic storylines reminiscent of Dickens and with a strong moral flavour are brought in time and again; Den and 'Chelle, Sharon and the Mitchells' love triangle. Den going to his death in concrete boots. The ganglands of the Eastend are alive and well on the BBC.



"I just want to cover you girls up,"  
 "I don't understand how you all do it, I really don't,"  
 "I'm sorry, I don't mean to stare at your tits, but... it's hard not to, you know,  
 "You're too good to be here. You're too nice to be working like this,"



"Hey, look at that chick over there, I mean isn't that a pretty chick?"  
 "She's beautiful. She's got a real pretty face and mighty jugs, ha ha,"  
 "Would you marry a woman like that?"  
 "Oh yeah, are you kidding?"  
 "Would you let your wife dress that way?"  
 "No, are you kidding? I'd knock her right on her arse,"  
 "Well, what did you dig her for in the first place?"  
 "Well, you know, her-er jugs were sticking out,"  
 "But you don't want her to dress that way now,"  
 "No, are you crazy? That's my wife!"

(-From the film *Lenny*, adapted from Lenny Bruce's stand-up material). \*

-In the film *Lenny*, this joke coincides with Lenny Bruce doing exactly the same thing. As his girlfriend, a stripper was hot stuff. But as his wife, Honey had to stop stripping and become a singer.

"You're worth more than them, luv.  
 Fuckin slags, you're not like that,"

-In Hollywood where whores are victims to be rescued or if not they're just cannon fodder honey, they aint gonna make it to the interval, the love of a woman is played off against every-one else. But I'm not flattered by singling me out as 'not a slag'. You respect my sisters, honey, coz you certainly aint different from the rest. This shrew aint for taming. Methinks the man has watched *Pretty Woman* one time too many...

-You want to take us all home. Puppies in the pet shop, it had such a nice face, I couldn't stop myself...

"I don't mean to stare at your tits, but..."

But nothing. I'm getting paid for you to stare at my tits and this night will go much, much slower if you attempt to bore my with chat up lines alluding you to rescuing me from my job into a life of whatever unimaginative drudgery goes on in this hick town. I will not appease your guilty conscience by colluding in your act which suggests that you have not, in fact, come to ogle my half-naked body. I'm happy to upkeep my part of the bargain to create a tableau to your liking, your part is to lap it up, show appreciation and tip me well. Acting like Richard Gere is not part of it. I have no wish for you to take me away from all this. I'm a professional

darling.

It seems difficult for some of these men to come to terms with the premise that I might rather be doing this than to be kept and looked after by them. Maybe I should take them up on the offer. They can help support cat, distro and zine as well. They can keep me in stamps, wine and dine me on vegan food, and allow me afternoons to go to the library. Coz although a walk-in wardrobe looks kinda fun, space and time and money to work is really what I need, where I'm at.

Sometimes I imagine their wives back home, perhaps when they're in bed later, he's just rolled on and rolled off her. she's bored.

"Was she pretty, the stripper?"

"Imagine you're making love to Richard Gere. Fantasize that the fat, snoring bloke in bed next to you is really Michael Bolton,"

-The kind of advice offered to bored, middle-aged house wives to bring the romance back into their marriages, by This Morning's premiere agony aunt, Denise Robertson.

"You're better than them .  
 You're too good to be doing this, they're just slags,"

Of course I'm like them. I'm a stripper, just like they are. I take my clothes off for money, don't I? Moving scenes to a more intellectual, enlightened audience, the general consensus is that my research is over, you can't still be doing that. You're different. You're doing it for different reasons. It's okay coz you're doing it for ART!

\*A slightly different version appears in the book *The Essential Lenny Bruce*. I kept the 1st one I discovered.



-Perhaps my failing is that I'd rather have Clint Eastwood or Robert de Niro than I would the smooth-talking, makes-my-skin-crawl Richard Gere. That I like my fantasy men to ride off into the sunset rather than to put expensive rings on my fingers.

I'm bored with the young blokes and their offensive manners to cover up their own embarrassment. I like the old guys who seem to have some understanding and respect for a tradition. They know it's history, its stars, its golden age. They've been through wives, and they just want to see a nice body and a good show before returning to their daughters, where they live now. Veterans of the scene, cynical of marriage, neither of us interested in playing games.

"Well they're certainly not ere for beer, I can tell yer that for a fact,"

-If women are all dutiful wives or whores, I'm going with the latter category. In the laws of Hollywood, it aint no fun being the little wife, you might get the walk-in wardrobe at first, but it's quickly replaced by kids, gin guzzling, a downward spiral getting more and more neurotic and hysterical. She aint the biggest part, but at least the whore gets a piece of the action. Maybe she's a hard-nosed, level-headed business woman. She's the only woman likely to get a look-in on the poker game. Yup, I'd rather be the whore.



**"Pygmalionism** is the decadent cliché which asserts that women are only the image of men's dreams, and that dream turned to reality will always disappoint."

**Mata Hari:-**

Hollywood belly dancer turned agent provocateur, shot dead as a German spy and now used as a euphemism for informer;

**Theda Bara:-**

The Ohian daughter of a Jewish tailor filled herself with Eastern promise and christened herself with an anagram of 'arab death';

**Ruth Sant Denis:-**

In 1904 said, "Herein after I will be Egypt,"

**Valerie Solanis:-**

The only time she ever wore a dress was the day she shot Andy Warhol;



**-and I think I'm the fuckin' Queen of Sheba!**



I was very very serious that clothes should not be an issue, or make-up, that I would not spend time on my appearance. Being serious about this became a hang-up to the point where I would spend time dwelling on the fact I was not going to spend time on my appearance. I always felt resentful because I believed I had missed out on something other girls had learned; that being feminine was an instinct. It was a gene thing and it was all my goddamn feminist athiest mother's fault. That wearing make-up, dressing up had to be done by certain RULES and CONVENTIONS and that as either I had missed out on it instinctively or misled my teacher I would not play.

Drag queens are subversive because they break these rules or conventions, because they can apply make-up so much better than I but I have also realized that women can feel in drag, too. I don't think I'm the first to take tentative steps in high heels, thinking, "What the fuck... HOW?"

In the book '*Whore Carnival*' (Shannon Bell- *Autonomea*) she quotes Gwendolyn, a Canadian stripper/ clown:-

"Those days I dressed dyke like, but my clown turned out to be super-femme. She wore high heels. She had tits stuck out and did ass-wiggling. I discovered this femme part of myself. It was fun and interesting and within six months I started stripping. I did feel like I was in drag at first. It was like a persona. Now I have integrated it. It came from me. The seed comes from within.

"Clowning is different from Stanislavsky. Stanislavsky says, "Don't limp until you feel your leg aching and you have to feel the hurt, feel it grow inside; if you impose a limp, it is going to be phony." A clown just puts on the clothes and assumes the work, and then she knows it inside.

"...That's what striptease is, it's female clowning. It doesn't have to be, but clowning has been part of striptease from the beginning."

Peta Lily (mime artist) claims a lot of women are afraid of the grotesque extremes of clowning, but are also afraid of the femininity or sexuality they may discover; "clowning brings out something inside of you and I think the problem with some of the women I've taught is that they've resisted the silliness in themselves because they've not wanted to be a girly clown."

I want to stop resisting. I now know I can be a lot of different things. By not wanting to be femme so much I was taking femininity as something rigid and serious and not to be played with. Nothing is permanent, and no-one looks 'themselves' when they first wake up.... Judith Butler argues that drag 'is not an imitation of any original; rather it is a parody of there being any original.'

It is oft believed that to be sexy and to be comic are the antithesis of one another. We should ignore that rule and risk the grotesque, overt girly sexual extremes of feminine clowns! I'd like to bring back the old word burlesque, so rich in different meanings, especially between Europe and America; originally, as a literary term, it simply meant a work that made a subject appear ridiculous either by presenting it with mock dignity, or by treating it in vulgar terms. In 19th century American showbiz, it began as women doing parodies of great epics and wearing revealing men's clothing, which showed the shape of their legs as never before.

It was, then, drag- sexual and comic combined, pantomime conventions and costume orientated! Gradually the American burlesque (strip) emerged, becoming more sensual and daring and culminating in the striptease.

Who shall I be today? What parody of womanhood? How many wigs shall I wear? How many outfits? How many feather boas? I find this reckless burlesque liberating. I find it sexy. I find it radical. I find it hilarious.

"Feminists are always arguing that sex magazines should not glamourize women and make them look 'perfect', because very few women can live up to that *Playboy* centerfold image. Thus, women are unsatisfied and insecure about their own bodies, and men are wondering why their lovers don't look like pin-ups. So as a feminist myself, I say let's *not stop* glamorizing women. Let's make them all look glamorous. Give *all* women a studio photography shoot-ing with a good make-up artist."

-Annie Sprinkle, *Post-Porn Modernist*.

"Every movement organization should have a prop and costume department."

-Abbie Hoffman, *Revolution For The Hell Of It*.



So the woman who had previously been sweetness and light in her desire to help told me she was sorry, but she wasn't going to explain anything to me, she was under no obligation and she found that image offensive and stormed off, leaving me muttering, "but I can explain," like Max Farnham caught with his pants down. I was ready to talk about the context of images, of turning them around; perhaps, this being an art college, I could have quoted John Berger; but the knee jerk reaction to the Readers Wives image was that of the irate feminist. So when I write on my list as a joke I'm gonna stock porn vids, whatcha reckon? I get angry letters back, like- there aint much underground d.i.y. porn created by (and for) women, ya dig? Like, I wish! So the knee-jerk-from-the-gut reaction remains, paranoia, harrassment and the frequent tampering with my mail continues, d'ya ever feel like telling J. Earland (mrs) to just, lighten up?

-Anal kissing, huh?

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## Notice of Seizure Indecent And Obscene Material



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The items described below are liable to forfeiture (see 1 below) because:-  
• they are considered to be indecent or obscene and are therefore prohibited from importation (see 2 below), or  
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They have therefore been seized (see 4 below).

Our ref:-

Date 8 July 1996

Reference number to in all correspondence	LPS 11022/96
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Dear Ms Stamp

I refer to your letter dated 3 July 1996 regarding the seizure of one magazine titled "Porn Free #7".

The importation of obscene material is prohibited by the Customs Consolidation Act 1876.

The magazine in your package has been examined and was found to contain graphic scenes of Fellatio, Bondage, Anal Kissing and Sado-masochism.

There is no exception for goods imported by post for personal use.

The other magazines <sup>were</sup> "The Story of Naughty One" Vol 1 X 4, "The Story of Naughty One" No 2, "My so called sex life" No 1 and No 2. "Jackpot" and assorted leaflets and order form. Although these are liable to seizure as they were packed with prohibited goods, if you send in a written request, we will release these items to you.

Yours sincerely



J EARLAND (MRS)  
OFFICER





## EROTIC DILEMMA

The arrival of Lap Dancing in Leeds has sparked fury among protestors — but is it as sleazy as they think? MAGNUS GARDHAM and CARMEN BRUEGMANN set foot inside to find out.

# Glamour or sleaze?

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### LOCAL NEWS

The Star, Tuesday, March 26, 1996

## Police call time on pub's live sex shows

**SLEAZY** strippers had full sex with members of the audience at a Sheffield East End pub.

The girls took part in mutual fondling and enticed men on stage to perform with them in a display at the Duke of Wellington, Brightside.

But unknown to them they were being watched by plain clothes officers who called time on the bar room frolics, branding their show "obscene".

Former landlord Thomas Farley pleaded guilty to running a rowdy house. He claimed he had to do something to try and attract new customers to his bar.

Jane Wragg, prosecuting, said: "Plain clothes officers watched a show during which a stripper encouraged several members of the audience to fondle her."

"Officers returned one Sunday lunchtime and watched the same girl

perform again," said Ms Wragg.

"Mr Farley was present and was seen paying the stripper," she added.

When interviewed at Attercliffe police station, Farley, aged 38, of Limsfield Road, Brightside, said that from behind the bar he could not see what was happening.

He did not deny the allegations with the audience, but he just claimed that he did not know they were taking place, said Ms Wragg.

John Evans, defending Farley, said the Wellington is a small pub in the East End of the city, where once there used to be many houses.

Most of them have been knocked down for redevelopment and there was little trade. He had no intention of running a public house again.

Stipendiary magistrate Sheila Driver said that owing to his circumstances she would fine Farley £200 with £30 costs.

The pub where the offences took place, and right, landlord Thomas Farley, fined £200

